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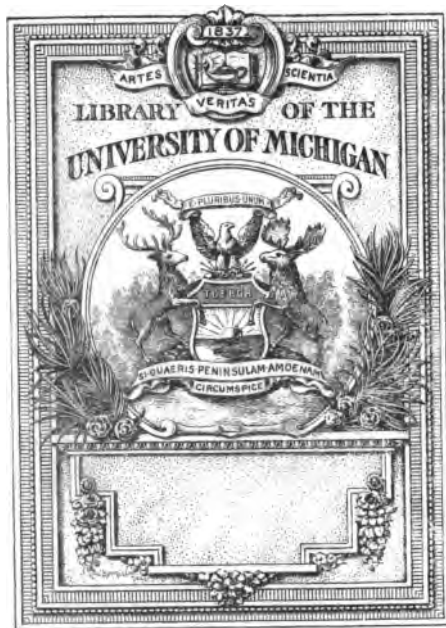
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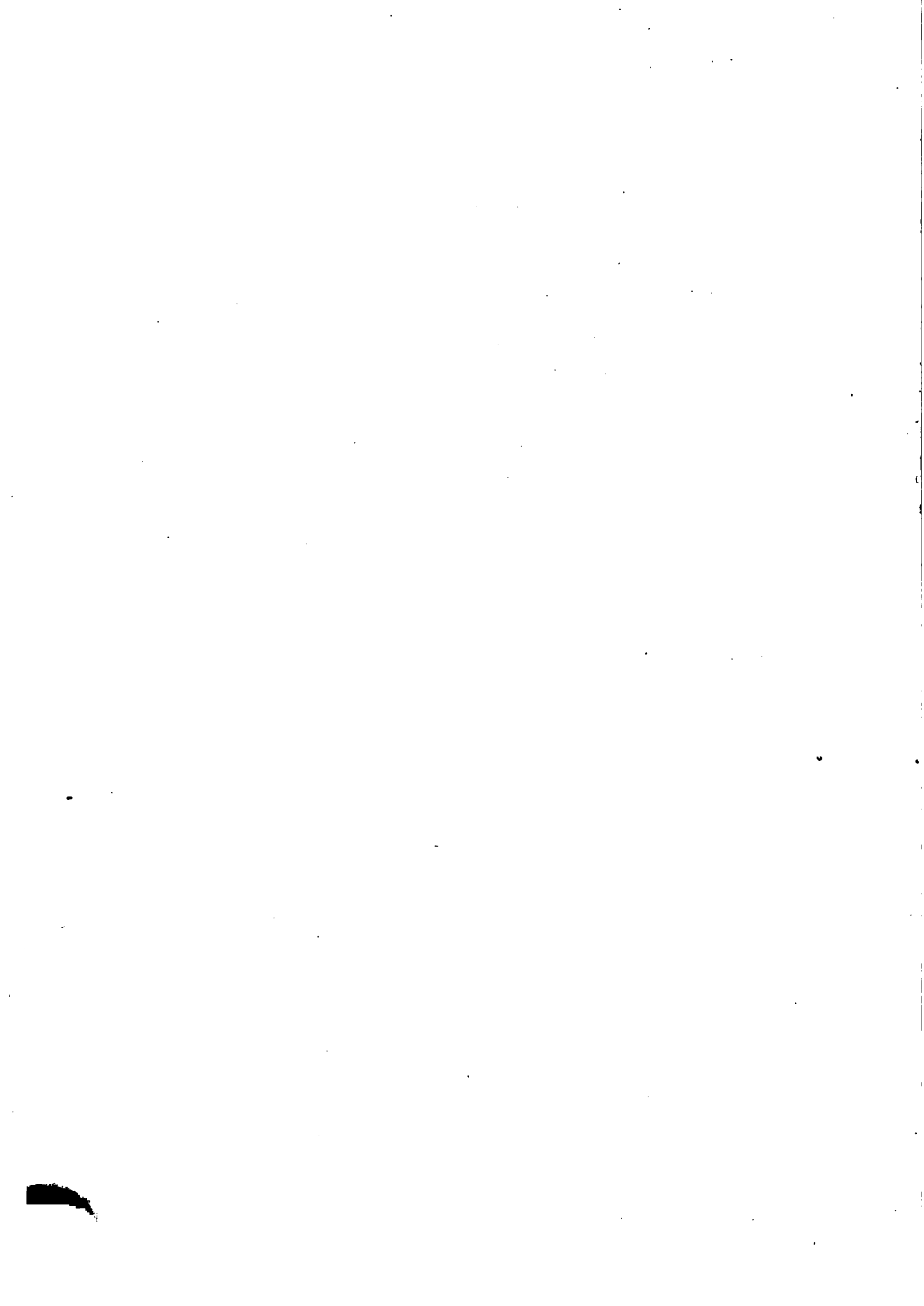
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THE
CITY OF SUCCESS

AND OTHER POEMS.

BY
HENRY ABBEY.

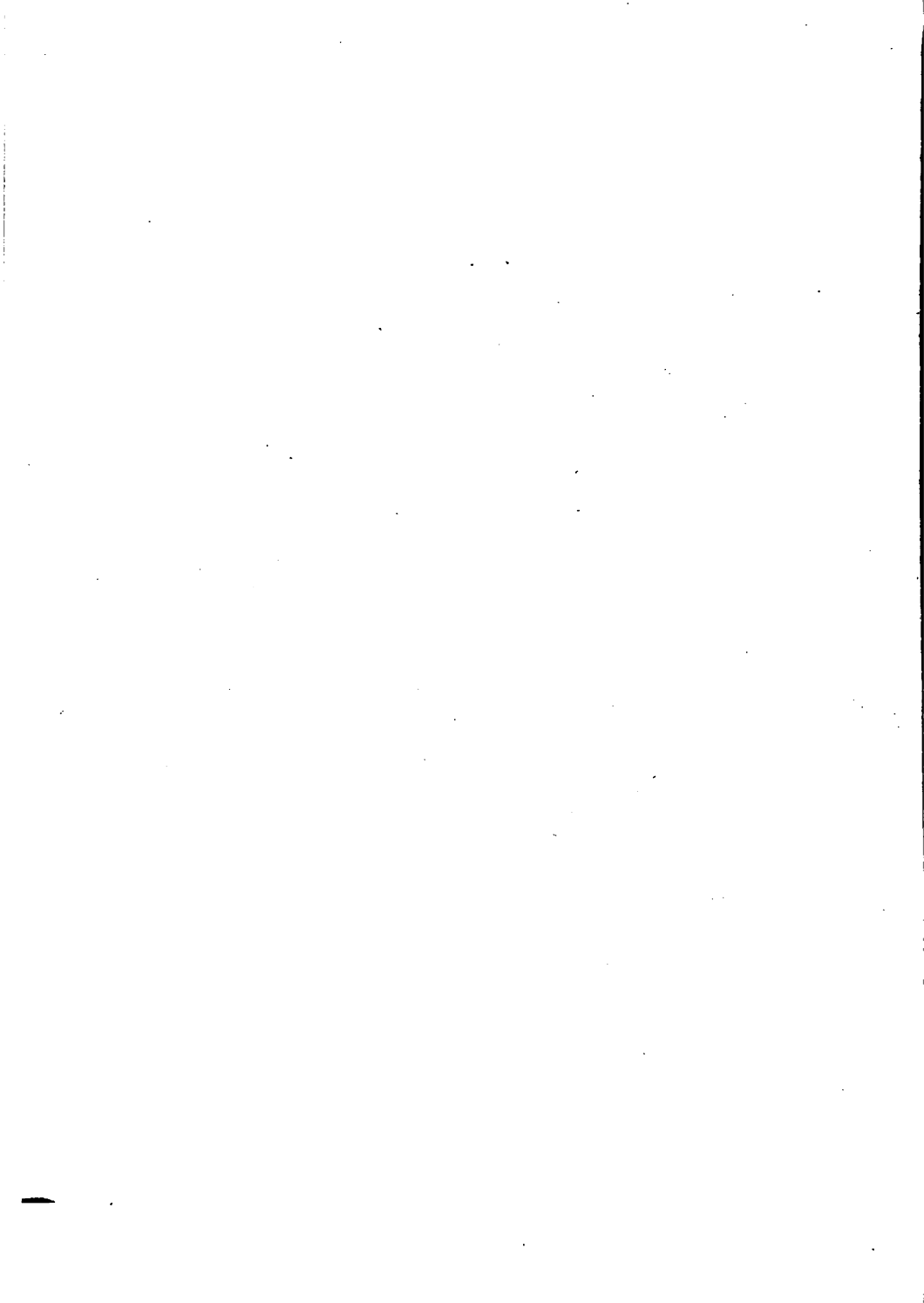
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3-15-64



Poems.



THE CITY OF SUCCESS.

WHERE a river hastens down,
Stands an often-wished-for town,
In the azure of the mountains, on a broad and level
vale.

Peaks of peace above it rise
To the ever-smiling skies,
And its air is not invaded by the armies of the gale.

Round the city stands a wall,
Where the watchmen clearly call
The flying hours, that speed away, with winged, in-
constant feet,
And, throughout the gilded place,
The palatial dwellings face
On cool-fountained park and garden, and on pleasure-
seeking street.

Sparsely-populated stands
 This, the pride of all the lands,
 In temple-crowned magnificence, the City of Success;
 For, tho all men strive full well,
 In its worldly halls to dwell,
 Few even reach the roads to it, through bitter strain
 and stress.

This fair city has great gates,
 And at each a dragon waits,
 With huge, unsated, open jaws, with sharp misfortune
 fanged.

High upon the barbican
 Floats hope's banner, dear to man;
 But vainly are the throng without from those proud
 walls harangued.

Witless men the gates avoid,
 And, in wily fraud employed,
 Mine under the cemented might which glitters, seen
 afar.

Having basely stolen through,
 They the secret passage rue,
 And strive to fill and cover it, and other folk
 debar.

Such men scoff and are ashamed,
 When, around the wide world famed,
 Some brave outsider scales the wall, and boldly takes
 his place,
 An exemplar, sweet to men,
 And most proper citizen,
 Who has no fear to turn and meet his clean past, face
 to face.

They, throughout the toilless year,
 Stand arraigned by vivid fear,
 Who, using methods sinister, have snared the swift-
 winged gold;
 For, if it be lost, they know
 That they forth must straightway go,
 And never more, but far away, the day-dream town
 behold.

Once, from here remote—in truth,
 Years ago—a handsome youth,
 Who plodded, on his father's land, behind the toilsome
 plow,
 Saw, tho dimly, and afar,
 This proud city, like a star
 Across the mist which islanded the mountain's peace-
 ful brow.

Well he loved a maiden true,
 That of his glad passion knew;
 For as he went one smiling day home from the fur-
 rowed field,
 With her milking-pail she came,
 And, with heart and lips aflame,
 He met her, told her all his joy, and to her heart ap-
 pealed.

With up-turned, delighted eyes,
 And low, tender-toned replies,
 She answered him, and plighted troth to make her his
 alone.
 Sweet the voices of the birds
 Mingled with the happy words,
 And to the pair the waiting fields abroad with love
 were sown.

"I must hasten forth," he said.
 "I shall win me more than bread,
 Till up a gracious path I reach the City of Success;
 Then, my dearest one, with you,
 In that city old and new,
 I shall abide, and naught but death shall make our
 joy the less."

With the dawning of the day
 Went he forth upon his way,
 Pursuing it undauntedly while year succeeded year,
 Till, among a busy throng,
 He was caught, and borne along;
 And one high noon he saw the town, for which he
 longed, appear.

When a gainful month had passed,
 He the city reached, at last;
 But, nearer than the environs, he could not force his
 way;
 For a selfish, struggling crowd,
 Fighting hard and crying loud,
 At the great gates seldom lifted, ever more were held
 at bay.

From among the press and fret,
 By a dragon hard beset,
 He, seeking sylvan rest, withdrew, one summer after-
 noon,
 And, reclining in the shade,
 Saw a lovely, jeweled maid,
 In her pavilion on the wall await the rising moon.

Thus she sang: "O moon of love!
 Shine thou down, my heart above,
 And light the sea that never yet was cleft by any
 keel.
 Quickly, sailor, launch and float;
 Wind and tide will aid thy boat;
 And let the young moon pilot thee to all it can
 reveal."

As the yearning music died,
 She who warbled it espied
 The baffled, youthful comeliness beside a lulling spring.
 To him gayly she let fall
 Silken steps, outside the wall,
 And beckoned him to mount by them to what the
 stars might bring.

To her heart he clambered up,
 And was asked to stay and sup,
 Beneath the fretted, curving roof of blue inlaid with
 gold;
 For, on ebony, was spread
 Yellow honey, milk and bread,
 And, as he ate, he saw two streets before his feet un-
 rolled.

He beheld the roofs and domes
Of the envied people's homes,
And far below, the valley with the river sparkling
through;
Rising fondly to the skies,
Where the river had its rise,
Stood the peaks of love enfolded in their gauzy robes
of blue.

Said the maiden to the youth,
"I beheld thee, with much ruth,
Among the motley, eager throng, who struggle at the
gates;
So when thee I saw to-day,
Where the woodland waters play,
For sending thee alone to me, I thanked the sister
fates.

"I desire that thou should'st know
What of happiness and woe
These solid walls encompass, and to what thou dost
aspire.
If the city please thee well,
And thou still herein would'st dwell,
My attendant may advise thee, if of her thou enquire."

As she spoke there came a maid,
In a nun-like garb arrayed,
With passive face, but beautiful; nay, pensive, pure
and kind.

She was dark, and down her back
Streamed her tresses thick and black,
While like a fringe upon her gown was amaranth en-
twined.

To the comely youth she bowed,
As the jeweled maiden proud
Rose and said, "Sir, this is Sorrow, my companion and
dear friend.

With her through the city go,
She thee it will fully show,
Will find for thee a place to lodge, and to thy needs
attend."

With a smile he bade good-night,
In the moonbeams vague and white,
Which into the pavilion strayed like specters gaunt
and thin;

Then with Sorrow he went down
To the streets, and through the town,
And found the house for which they sought that he
might lodge therein.

Heavy carpets spread the floors,
 Noiseless were the walnut doors
 Set with carven Dryad panels, or with stained and
 flowered glass;
 Thick, embroidered curtains swung
 From the walls with paintings hung,
 And a dial-seated Clio marked the silent moments
 pass.

In Success few mornings frown;
 And the youth, to view the town,
 When morning came, with Sorrow went through stat-
 ued park and street;
 But they joined a passing throng,
 As it coldly moved along
 Toward the temple built to Fortune, low to worship
 at her feet.

Up against the blue immense,
 In its gold magnificence
 Of pillared gold enforested, of architrave and frieze,
 All of yellow gold and good,
 On a hill the temple stood,
 And cast its splendor on the vale and out beyond the
 seas.

That proud hill was covered round,
 So that none might see the ground,
 With marble steps of hueless white which led up to
 the fane. \

Urn of plants and fountain's jet
 On each rank of steps were set,
 And seemed like new spring breaking forth from
 winter's snowy reign.

In the temple, high in place
 Stood dame Fortune fair of face,
 Holding Plutus, god of riches, in her fond and fickle
 arms.

Horns of plenty at her feet
 Emptied half their contents sweet,
 And winged Cupid stood before her, fascinated by her
 charms.

O'er the checkered floor of gold
 Went her crafty priests and bold,
 Swinging incense through the concourse of disdainful
 devotees,
 Some of whom were racked with pains;
 Few could much enjoy their gains;
 In plenty doomed to abstinence, they bowed upon
 their knees.

Some with Sorrow had to sup,
 And she gave to them her cup,
 Whereof they drank the bitterness, with unavailing
 tears ;

Some had kissed the lips of joy,
 And had found how pleasures cloy,
 And other some for greed of gold made hard and
 cold their years.

From a gallery was heard,
 Like the carol of a bird
 Which, to the heart of darkness, tells the music of its
 dream,
 A surpassing voice, so rare
 That it loosed the bonds of care,
 And seemed a strain from heaven borne along the
 spirit's stream.

"Goddess Fortune, great art thou ;
 Asking gifts, to thee we bow,
 Daughter of great Oceanus, and protectress of the
 town.
 Thoughtful Hellas thee adored,
 And divine libations poured,
 Whilst Rome to thee eight temples built, lest haply
 thou might'st frown.

“All men woo thee, some with wiles,
 Praying for thy sunny smiles,
 Chasing thee in town and village, and upon thy parent
 sea.

Turn thy mediæval wheel;
 Youth and age before thee kneel;
 For they, who would on roses rest, must be beloved
 by thee.”

When the singing ceased, the youth,
 Holding Sorrow's hand of ruth,
 Was led forth of Fortune's presence to the shining
 portico.

Thence his glance around he cast
 On the city, strong and vast,
 Which, in a stone monotony of buildings, lay below.

Like a belt, about it all,
 Ran the towered and gated wall,
 A century of miles or more, a score of chariots
 wide;

While on a neighboring hill
 Stood a temple, higher still
 Than this one built to Fortune, and a voice from out
 it cried.

"On the morrow," Sorrow said,
 As she down the stairway led,
 "To the other, higher temple, we shall betimes repair.
 Now the placid hour is late;
 See, my liveried servants wait
 With my horses, which are restless; and let us homeward fare."

"Tell me of the jeweled maid
 Who bestowed the silken aid,
 Whereby I entered," said the youth, "this moneyed,
 ample town."
 Sorrow turned, and thus replied:
 "Would'st thou have her for thy bride,
 And dwell within this streeted wealth, till thy life's
 sun goes down?

"She has great possessions here;
 Yet her life is sad and drear,
 Because wan Death, in dungeons dark, has shut her
 dearest kin.
 Of the youth who come to woo,
 None seem to her good and true;
 But you woke her admiration, and her love you soon
 might win."

All that night, in dreams of gold,
 At his tired feet lay unrolled
 Two streets, two open ways which led along his future
 far ;
 But he wist not which to take,
 Tho one led to brier and brake,
 And, at the other's slender end, shone bright a droop-
 ing star.

In the morning Sorrow came,
 And they went to look on Fame,
 Where in her temple she abode upon her sightly hill.
 Many paths secluded wound
 Slowly up the rising ground,
 And here were highways beaten hard by persevering
 will.

Not all these to Fame upreached,
 Yet in all lay dead leaves bleached,
 Tho still the haze of summer veiled the languid,
 dreamy air.
 Facing north, south, east and west,
 On the high hill's level crest,
 Stood the temple in the splendor of Apollo's golden
 hair.

Of Pentelic marble pure,
Which forever would endure,
The fane was graven over with the sounded names of
men.

From it rose an airy dome,
Like the one that broods on Rome,
But vaster, and with windows set, and symbols, sword
and pen.

On the four wide pediments
Were informed the great events
Which change the course of history, and for the truth
make room.

On the west, Columbus stood,
In majestic marblehood,
Forever on San Salvador, no more in chains and
gloom.

On the unforgetful stone,
Many names were overgrown
With ivy green and lichen brown, oblivion's slow
hands;
But the priests of Fame benign,
Tearing off the weeds malign,
Often made some splendid jewel, thus discovered, light
the lands.

This great fane, so carven on,
 Fairer than the Parthenon,
 Was tenfold larger; and, untouched by time and war,
 looked down.
 At each entrance high and wide,
 Obelisks, on either side,
 In tall, Syenic massiveness, set forth antique renown.

Gentle Sorrow and her charge,
 Entering the temple large,
 Looked round the vast basilica, and saw the vaulted
 roof,
 Which was propped by pillars high,
 Of gray gneiss and porphyry;
 And in the groins the echoes trooped and mumbled,
 far aloof.

On the niched and statued wall,
 On the tiles and pillars all,
 They saw the biographic lists of splendid names ex-
 tant;
 And the laurel, which without
 In profusion grew about,
 Within was plaited into praise which Fame was pleased
 to grant.

With her trumpet at her lips,
 With her girdle at her hips,
 Robed in Tyrian-dyed softness, stood the goddess fair
 to see.

Oft her mighty voice she sent,
 Through the lifted instrument,
 Round the world to every people, and to nations yet
 to be.

Just before immortal Fame
 Was an altar with its flame,
 And a vestal guardian-angel, who renewed the sacred
 fire.

From her wings a glory streamed,
 While her face with beauty beamed
 As she fed this flame of genius, that it never might
 expire.

A pure crystal, man-high vase
 Was the altar, carved with bays
 And, in relief, with goat-legged Pan that piped upon a
 reed ;
 There too, Theban Hercules,
 From the fair Hesperides,
 Took precious fruit, and slew a wrong, in one exalted
 deed.

From the altar's golden bowl
 Flared the flame's undying soul,
 And lighted up the potent fane and Fame's benignant
 face.

Other light than this was none,
 Save that which so faintly shone
 In the lofty dome's void hollow in the distant upper
 space.

Entering through the slanted roof,
 Seemed a warp without the woof,—
 The wire, electric nerves of Fame, which go about the
 world.

On the shelves of pillared nooks
 Was a mental wealth of books,
 And tattered flags of victory above it hung unfurled.

Of the worshipers who came,
 Seeking there to add a name,
 The youth beheld that some not least were illy clad
 and poor.

"Tell me, Sorrow," murmured he,
 "What injustice this may be?
 And why success for poverty should fail to be a
 cure?"

"These," said she, "are they that long
 From the world have suffered wrong,
 The authors and inventors who have little else than
 fame;
 These would have sufficient gold,
 Were it not that, dull and cold,
 The people rob them statedly, and do by law the
 shame.

"It seems not enough that they,
 Who with me pursue their way
 Along the crags of knowledge, to enrich the world,
 indeed,
 Should be troubled and depressed,
 And upon me lean for rest,
 Who am alien to the comfort and to the peace they
 need."

But while Sorrow spoke, the maid,
 Who had lent the silken aid,
 Approached the twain and greeted them with pleasure
 in her grace;
 And they knew that she was fair,
 With her golden crown of hair
 O'er tender eyes that filled with soul the beauty of
 her face.

As across the lettered floor
 They were passing toward the door,
 The lovely maiden to the youth her speech again
 addressed:

“On the wall to-morrow night,
 Will appear a thrilling sight;
 For the horsemen, with their horses, are to race there,
 ten abreast.

“If to see the race you care,
 And a drive with me will share,
 I will call for you in season, while the clocks are
 beating nine.”

He replied that he would go,
 And, to streets spread out below,
 They loitered down a laurel path before the fane
 divine.

Him the maiden bade adieu;
 Then, with Sorrow tried and true,
 He rode, and came to where arose a liliated, marble
 spire.

“Here,” said Sorrow, “they bow down,
 And shall win a happy crown,
 Who tread my path with humble feet, and crush each,
 low desire.

"My dark path leads up to joy
 That I know not, nor annoy;
 For that it lies beyond my bourn, a lucent pearl,
 great-priced."
 Sorrow wept, and, with the youth,
 Entered this abode of truth,
 And heard the holy story of the mild and patient
 Christ.

In the morning cool and sweet,
 Out upon the peopled street,
 Alone the youth went, seeing much along the paven
 miles.
 Every house was rich and fine
 In its beauty of design;
 Yet the fountain gargoyles only, for the passer-by had
 smiles.

Everywhere the youth could see
 There was no immunity
 From any evil which the world outside the walls
 endured.
 Here were sickness, pain and death,
 Shame and crime with poison breath,
 And even breadless poverty a dwelling here secured.

Some who never come this way
 Have as much of joy as they
 Who here abide in opulence, their idlest wants supplied;
 For success lies in degrees,
 And to rise to one of these,
 And see the others higher still, is like a thorn to pride.

Up and down throughout Success
 Sought the youth for happiness,
 And saw it was an empty dream in foolish fashion'
 halls.
 Everywhere it was alloyed;
 Nothing fully was enjoyed;
 For Discontent went round, or sat repining on the
 walls.

When the rising moon shone white,
 And the city was alight,
 The lady came, and took the youth to see the eager
 race.
 Up the wall ran highways wide,
 Whereon streamed a living tide
 Skyward to the race-course straight, and poured about
 the place.

All that seven-mile course along,
 On each buttress tall and strong,
 Which propped the wall on either side, and o'er its
 top arose,
 Stood the slanted seats, where pressed
 Countless people, richly dressed,
 Who took their places to behold the swift event un-
 close.

On the dizzy battlements,
 Brazen cressets burned intense,
 And flushed the massive, mighty wall with scarlet
 flowers of fire,
 Lighting up with lurid glare
 The expectant thousands there,
 And beaming down the valley with the fervor of
 desire.

At the goal were cressets two
 Flinging up flame-arms of blue,
 And, just beyond, abruptly stood an angle of the wall.
 The unmoving foot of this
 Rested on a precipice,
 And the pebbles men flung down it seemed to never
 cease to fall.

In the shining, jeweled sword,
 Belted, with a twinkling cord,
 To the thigh of bright Orion, where he stands august
 in space,
 Is a gulf of darkness great,
 Where no sun's rays penetrate,—
 An awful gulf of nothingness,—a black and worldless
 place.

So appeared the dread abyss,
 Down the wall and precipice,
 To those who, in the night, with fear, looked o'er the
 balustrade.
 Even the cressets' angry bloom,
 Parted not the heavy gloom
 Which lay, appallingly beneath, in one dense hush of
 shade.

Near the goal, the lady fair
 And the youth she made her care
 Were waiting, on the cushioned seats, and Sorrow sat
 between.
 Sorrow met them on the way,
 Craving leave with them to stay,
 And now of either clasped a hand, and looked upon
 the scene.

At the place of starting stood,
 Strong, and brave to hardihood,
 The horsemen in their chariots, their horses fiery-
 eyed,—
 Coal-black coursers curbed with pain,
 Plunging, fretting at the rein,
 Long of limb and shaggy mane, and to the winds
 allied.

Now they start!—a score of teams
 Harnessed to revolving gleams,
 And speed along the softened course upon the city's
 wall.
 One low-browed, dark raceman dares
 Of the beasts to drive three pairs,
 And tho he first was left behind, he won upon them
 all.

It was pleasure worth the view,
 When the horses almost flew,
 To note the rhythmic movement wherewith some
 strained ahead.
 These were urged by men of will,
 And a beauty, high and still,
 Was in the drivers' faces while they ruled the strength
 they sped.

As of these each horseman fleets
By the living, breathless seats,
The praise of hands and mouths and flowers upon him
is bestowed ;
Yet anew it makes him feel
He must prove more true than steel,
To win the goal through strong restraint along the
flying road.

Some gave out upon the way.
Those who in the race must stay,
With haggard looks and hideous, held slack the useless
rein.
They, in pressing toward the goal,
Of their beasts had lost control,
And the dark, relentless passions on to ruin dashed
amain.

Only one man firm and true,
Paused beyond the lights of blue ;
For the rest, who were behind him, rushing by with
panting breath,
From the sheer and sullen wall
Leaped, and beasts and drivers, all,
At the balustraded angle, uttered headlong down to
death.

Then upon each seated bank
 Grew the weed, confusion, rank,
 And on the wall the people streamed with shouts and
 mournful cries.
 In the pressure and dismay,
 Sorrow's hand-clasp slipped away,
 And the youth could nowhere find it, nor the fair
 with tender eyes.

Back from wall and buttress wide,
 Down the highways ebbed the tide,—
 A saddened, shuddering, troubled thing, whose rose
 was ever thorned.
 At the goal, the youth, alone,
 Saw that all the rest were gone,
 And saw, in sapphire loneliness, the crescent, silver
 horned.

Far below him, in the vale,
 Honor's river, winged with sail,
 Flowed along the hazy quiet, deep and strong, and
 sparkling bright.
 Far away the rim loomed up
 Of the valley's massive cup
 Which held the drowsy nectar of cool, delicious night.

He beheld, near where he stood,
 Bathed in ruby cresset-blood,
 Or the flame's glare falling on her, a woman quite
 alone.

As she turned and beckoned him,
 Through the shadows vague and dim
 He thought that he descried the face of her who was
 his own.

But, when he had reached her side,
 And her features dignified
 Looked down with cold severity, he knew it was not
 she.

With harsh voice the woman said,
 "I am Duty, and have led
 Her heart to whom you plighted troth; oh, turn and
 follow me.

"They who truly find success,
 Come to it through faithfulness,
 And not by silken ladders let by tender women down.
 Happiness is found, good youth,
 In sweet love and honest truth,
 And naught suffices for their loss in all this pleasant
 town."

Down a highway to the street,
These two went with willing feet,
And at a gate a sentinel, who knew stern Duty well,
Raised the gate to let them through;
For the youth, to Duty true,
Followed her in weary darkness till they rested in a
dell.

At their feet the river flowed;
Soon the east with morning glowed,
And they were on their way to her whose love the
youth had won.
From a vessel dropping down,
Laden near the distant town,
They heard the boatmen's parting song, and watched
the rising sun.

"We depart, and little care,
Gilded city high in air,
That allures the simple-hearted from his peaceful
home away;
For where honor's river flows,
And the breeze of duty blows,
We guide the prow, across the night, to harbors of
the day.

“We the way to joy have found;
But while sailing, seaward bound,
We quaff the sparkle and delight of that o’er which
we go.
In thee, city, shadows dwell;
To thy walls, farewell, farewell;
We seek the eternal ocean where the tides of gladness
flow.”

BALLAD OF CONSOLATION.

A pious, Catholic woman,
Who was poor, and lowly born,
For her patron chose good Saint Joseph,
And prayed to him night and morn.
And when she was married a twelvemonth,
A chain of gladness and joy,
She named in the patron-saint's honor,
Her dear little baby boy.

She dwelt at the rim of the city,
In a rude cabin—her shrine;
And a frail vine bore, by the doorstep,
One morning-glory divine.
But the day that the waxen angel
Bloomed out in the sunlight wide,
That day the delight of the woman,
The flower of her bosom, died.

They bitterly mourned for their darling,
The laborer and his wife ;
The cloud and the storm were upon them
In that starless night of life.
Their loss seemed a dolorous burden
Sent for a cross from on high.
He went without heart to his labor,
She turned to her cares with a sigh.

But time is a whirlpool of changes,
And, ere another year fled,
A second man-child in the cabin
Had taken the place of the dead.
The prayerful, affectionate mother,
With courage that did not faint,
Had the second new-comer christened
The name of her patron-saint.

The baby grew daily, waxed stronger,
And prattled with wonder and glee.
The heart of the mother was joyful,
His innocent ways to see.
She fancied in day-dreams his future,
And found, in the golden years,
Relief from hard toil for his father,
And songs for her cares and tears.

For she saw her babe in his manhood,
 Noble and rich; and again,
 The crown and chief star of the city,
 A far-sighted leader of men.
 But how shall love, that goes blindfold,
 Look into the future far
 Whose heavy mists haste, unsundered,
 Before time's radiant car?

Ripe Autumn came sighing and weeping,
 Bearing her sickle and sheaves,
 And into the laborer's cabin
 Threw wildly some faded leaves.
 The pretty babe sickened, and withered
 Like leaves in the north-wind's breath,
 And the gleaming sickle of autumn
 Preceded the sickle of death.

The hopes of the father and mother,
 Once more, in either true heart,
 Lay ruthlessly ruined and scattered,
 Like a rose that is torn apart.
 But the woman, trusting, believing,
 Lifted her spirit in prayer,
 And craved of the holy Saint Joseph
 To pity her new despair.

When three fast-flying years had vanished
Like birds in a twilight sky,
Again in the laborer's cabin
Was uttered a feeble cry.
And the grateful, reverent mother,
With a faith which all-sufficed,
Named her last child too for Saint Joseph
Who tended the infant Christ.

She prayed to the saint to watch over
And guard her own little son,
And spare him to comfort her heartache,
Till her troubled days should be done.
She thought that her prayer had been granted,
For her soul-gemmed jewel and prize
Lived on through three seasons, and, smiling,
Looked up with heavenly eyes.

Then Winter came freezing and blowing,
His long hair streaming and hoar;
To enter the laborer's cabin,
He tugged at window and door;
But a colder than he and sadder
A readier entrance found,
And covered the babe's small body
As the white snow did the ground.

From its side the mother rose wailing,
 And tore her disheveled hair,
 And wrung her mute hands in expression
 Of wordless depths of despair.
 It seemed an injustice of Heaven,
 The death that she mourned that day.
 She prayed not; but jeered at Saint Joseph
 For taking her lambs away.

The picture of Infant and Virgin,
 Which hung in the humble room,
 To her was unfeeling, disdainful,
 And mocked at her childless doom.
 Her rosary rested uncounted,
 Its crucifix broken in two,
 And she blamed her patron-saint ever
 For being harsh and untrue.

So the desolate days and prayerless
 Flew on into budding spring;
 But no change in the dark dejection
 Did their gloomy pinions bring,
 Till one night, when, in vain derision,
 The woman had scoffed at prayer,
 She found, in a mystical vision,
 A solace for her despair.

The landscape lay vernal about her,
 The air was fragrant and still.
 She saw, with a feeling of horror,
 Three gallows high on a hill.
 Then she heard glad, musical voices,
 And, turning toward whence they came,
 Beheld four angels approaching,
 And each one called her by name.

The oldest was tall and majestic,
 With wings of radiant gold,
 Like that in the cloud-lands of sunset,
 In molten splendor uprolled.
 The linen of purity clothed him
 In lines of delicate grace,
 And a halo above him lightened
 The boundless calm of his face.

The three other angels were smaller,
 With wings like silver, which shone
 As the moon, or the pearl heart of Hesper.
 The roses brought, they had thrown
 At the feet of the sorrowful woman,
 As they looked upon her and smiled;
 And she thought she had seen their faces
 In dreams or when only a child.

The radiant, golden-winged angel
Spoke to the woman and said :
"I am your scorned patron, Saint Joseph ;
I care for and tend your dead.
I was pleased with your faith, but troubled
When your heart found no relief ;
For always the angels of heaven
Sympathize deeply with grief.

"I loved with deep joy the young children
That you had given my name ;
But I looked out into their futures,
And saw that their lives meant shame.
See, yonder, alone on the hill-top,
The three dread gallows appear,
Which would have been built for the offspring
You fondled, and prayed to rear.

"Wherefore, I at once interceded
To save you disgrace so sore,
And was given to choose between it
And the early deaths you deplore.
So, guided by tender compassion,
I took your young children three ;
And they are these loving immortals
Who came to meet you with me."

The angels with silvery pinions
Embraced their own mother dear ;
Their kisses made saintly her features
That had been haggard and drear ;
And they said, " O sorrowful mother,
Be joyful, and do not sigh,
For we are all waiting and longing
To welcome you in the sky."

The woman arose from her slumber,
And heard the merry birds sing.
The air was sweet-scented and warmer,
The landscape verdant with spring.
She knelt repentant and thankful,
And from bitterness had release ;
For, as the earth was clothed in verdure,
Her spirit was robed with peace.

POPLICOLA.

WHEN Roman virtue was aroused, and had deposed
the kings,
Looking on all their pomp and pride as unbecoming
things,
When lustful Tarquin had been crushed by all-aveng-
ing Fate,
A consul, named Valerius, became the head of
state.

In white, unconscious stateliness of beauty pure and
good,
His dwelling-house, upon a hill before the forum,
stood.
Rome's grave assembly, gazing up, soon made the house
a foe,
And thought it looked with jealousy on what was
done below.

To see come forth Valerius and his attendant train,
With rods and axes proudly borne, as if in high disdain;
To see them then descend the hill before the forum
 wide,
To some men was a spectacle to regal pomp allied.

It was indeed a stately sight of which a bard might sing;
But men would have that it was meant to shadow forth
 the king.

They said too that the consul's house, wherewith the
 hill was crowned,
Was grander than the king's which once he leveled
 with the ground.

Love's shadow is dark jealousy; and jealousy knows
 fear;
For men who love their country much, and hold their
 freedom dear,
Are jealous of the tendencies in him they trust with
 power,
Lest he, on their loved liberty, should bring a trying
 hour.

But when the wise Valerius knew what of him was said,
And, that the people, whom he loved, regarded him
 with dread,

He sent for many laborers, and, in a single night,
Pulled down the walls of his offense, and blotted it
from sight.

The people in the morning came and saw that it was
gone,
The dwelling which an architect had lavished beauty
on ;
And, when they knew it was destroyed because of
what they said,
They mourned for it, as if it were a human being
dead.

The sight of it was lost to them, they felt, with sense
of shame,
And, for unfounded jealousy, they held themselves to
blame.
Through these light mists of kind regret the consul's
rising star
Shone in the heaven of men's minds like Phœbus in
his car.

Valerius now owned no roof, but had to lodge with
friends,
Until the people built a house, and hewed him stone
amends.

It stood not on the haughty hill where his offense had
stood,

Nor had it aught of stateliness, tho suitable and good.

They bear the palm and rule the best who merely
wish to serve;

And nothing from a will like that could make the
consul swerve.

He meant to found a government the just would not
o'erturn,

And made it pleasant, lovable; not distant, proud and
stern.

He mingled with the people all, to learn the common
will,

And ever made its finer sense his duty to fulfill.

He was familiar, kind and true to those that to him
came,

And all the winds of heaven blew the trumpet of his
fame.

Surrounded by his civic guards, he to the forum went,
Whenever the assembly met for acts of government.

On entering, he bowed his head, and, to the left and
right,

His guards their rods and axes lowered before the
People's might.

Yet was the man's humility the noble means he took,
Not, as men thought, to dwarf himself for reputation's
book ;

But to disarm their doubts and fears, so quick to rise
and frown,

And by a wise forbearance keep the dragon, envy,
down.

For envy comes from ignorance, that sees the outward
show,

And lightly thinks of all the cares which with high
office go.

Hence bad men climb to power, and glut the ways
that lead to it,

And cause reproach to make it seem for honest men
unfit.

The honor of Valerius was sweet to every lip.

He gave the right to citizens to sue for consulship ;

Yet ere he would a colleague take, lest one might
thwart the cause,

He built a house for liberty of just and equal laws.

He made it death to seize on power without the
people's leave.

He raised offenders one more hope their freedom to
retrieve ;

The sentence which the consuls gave the people might
relax,
And he the poorer citizens disburdened of a tax.

What thus from his authority he wisely took away,
He added to his real power which in the people lay.
For they submitted willingly, and showed their happy
state,
By calling him Poplicola, or People-lover Great.

Poplicola! Poplicola! re-echoes in the air.
Across the silent centuries I hear fame's trumpet
blare.
Across wide wastes of slavery, time's dusty deserts
vast,
The splendid name comes sounding down from out
the darkened past.

I see its way along the years; I see how pomp and
pride
Have robbed the people of their rights, and turned
the truth aside.
In crowned oppression's bloody work to rivet fast
men's chains,
I see the strife for freedom sway,—the losses and the
gains.

What wonder that when, sere with age, the grand old
Roman died,
The people deeply felt the debt they owed this faithful guide?
The flowers he found on freedom's heights they scattered round his bier,
And, as a special honor-mark, all women mourned a year.

O Liberty! that on our land hast seemed to kindly smile,
Oh, let not wealth and pride of place men's hearts from thee beguile;
But give us rulers such as he, who was, in truth, a man,
Poplicola Valerius, the plain republican.

THE CITY OF DECAY.

A RIVER and a highway,
Running close beside each other,
Led along through pleasant queendoms
To an ancient, peaceful town;
And upon the road a gray-beard,
A bent and wrinkled brother,
Pursued his weary journey
The Autumn realm adown.

He had left Spring's budding country,
And passed through that of Summer,
And through the land of Autumn
Was well upon his way,
When in a tree of knowledge
Perched a bird, and to the comer,
Who was gazing on the river,
Caroled sweet a welcome lay.

Dragging from this boat of music
 His close net of recollection,
 Went the gray-beard's thought, regretting
 One great pearl that he had lost.
 He beheld again the country
 Ruled by Spring, and the reflection,
 In his spirit's limpid waters,
 Of the star-like pearl of cost.

Then a Truth-sayer far-sighted
 Came upon the gray-beard dreaming
 In the thoughtful, wayside shadow
 Of the vocal, golden tree;
 And he said to him, "O brother,
 Would'st thou find thy pearl, whose seeming
 So enchants thy soul with beauty
 Which thou think'st no more shall be?

"In the ocean-bounded city
 Whither thou art tending surely,
 Undissolved thy pearl awaits thee,
 By the dark and silent shore.
 Do thine alms-deeds; follow mercy;
 Hold thy hand from wrong securely;
 When thy pearl again elates thee,
 Thou shalt have it evermore."

To behold the Prophet fully,
 Turned the traveler sedately,
 With doubt and hope alternately
 Depicted on his face;
 But the sayer had departed,
 And the other wondered greatly
 That one who spoke so kingly
 Should on him look with grace.

All one way the folk were going,
 On the highway by the river,
 In their journey nearing daily
 The city by the sea.
 Long the gray-beard searched among them
 With his wrinkled lips aquiver,
 For the Prophet who so kindly
 Had foretold the joy to be.

But he found him not, and sadly
 Down the road his course pursuing,
 Saw the withered leaves whirled wildly
 And cast upon the stream;
 He saw how swiftly ran the tide
 Which sped to its undoing,
 And, on the birds that dipped and rose,
 He watched the sunlight gleam.

Often ships of cloud sailed o'er him
With their portly canvas lifted,
Or drowsily at anchor lay
In harbors of the blue.
Often in a frail, small shallop,
On the tide at night he drifted,
And slept till, with a fading star,
The light of morning grew.

Then on wakefulness he stranded,
And took up his busy journey,
Thinking deeply of the promise
Which so freely had been made,
Till around his path devoted,
Rose the winds in tilt and tourney,
As if the gusts of doubt and scorn
Would make his faith afraid.

But through these he went undaunted,
And one day, when brightly o'er him
Shone the sun by clouds unhaunted,
At his feet a valley lay.
He was standing on a hill-top,
While far away before him,
Where the river cleft the sea-coast,
Rose the City of Decay.

Far beyond it, black and silent
 Stretched oblivion's deep ocean,
 With a gloomy fog thick-burdened,
 Lost against the western sky ;
 While Time's river, flowing onward
 With unceasing, steady motion,
 Emptied into waveless waters
 And unfathomed mystery.

Oft a vessel steered by Circé,
 Down the ebbing river sailing,
 Ventured out upon the silence,
 Disappearing in the gloom ;
 But not one came back, or wafted
 Sounds of laughter or of wailing,
 From pale Proserpine and Pluto's
 Dimly-lighted land of doom.

Down the highway to the city
 Came the gray-beard through the valley,
 And in the sunset glory
 Stood near the crumbling wall.
 At the gateway high and mossy
 He had paused, his strength to rally,
 While expectant hope allured him
 With the joy that might befall.

Wide the rusty gates stood open,
 Neglected and unguarded;
 For any one might enter
 Who down the road had come.
 The gate-bolts in the passage
 Half imbedded lay discarded,
 And echo led along the place
 With twilight gray and dumb.

Here the air was damp and chilly,
 And drew, with pencil rimy,
 The arabesques of Winter
 On the stones that arched the way.
 Within the vast metropolis
 The walls with dew were slimy;
 It was in the land of Autumn,
 But it seemed the month of May.

Tho the border-lands of Winter
 To the city were adjacent,
 Above the sullen ocean
 Came up the sultry south;
 While the withered crone, called Ruin,
 In pride of dress complacent,
 With grass and ivy robed herself
 And veiled her gaping mouth.

On the city wall grew poppies
Red as wine or white as lilies,
And drowsily they lifted
Their faces to the sun.
In his ruddy vest, the robin,
Proud, erect—a winged Achilles,
Sang the liquid notes no longer,
Which in Spring his mate had won.

In the city dwelt in plenty,
In a mansion quaint and olden,
One who was a lady truly,
For she doled the poor her bread.
Her rare charm of face and manner
Hid her years in gloss all golden,
While it changed her hair of silver
To a halo round her head.

Long ago, ere she was wedded,
Came a handsome youth true-hearted,
And offered her the deep-red rose
Whose gladness filled his breast;
But too late; her troth was plighted;
Yet with dim regret she parted
From him who, under better stars,
She might have loved the best.

Now her husband and her children
 Were in the church-yard sleeping,
 And, with Kindness to attend her,
 She down life's hill made way.
 She watched the couch of sickness,
 She calmed the voice of weeping,
 And trod the paths of mercy
 Through the City of Decay.

Haply hearing of her goodness,
 That it was a potent essence
 To cheer the friendless stranger,
 Or heal misfortune's sting,
 The gray-beard sought her dwelling-house,
 And, standing in her presence,
 The fading flower discovered
 Whose bud he loved in Spring.

He gave his name, and briefly
 Told her of their early meeting,
 And of the years made desolate
 By hope's departing gleam.
 The woman came and took his hand
 With smiles and kindly greeting;
 Yet, looking in each other's eyes,
 Even love was like a dream.

He told her of the precious pearl
 Which slipped from his possession
 In Summer's fervent queendom
 Into Time's elusive tide,
 And of the lofty Truthsayer
 Who warned him from transgression,
 And promised that the missing pearl
 With him would soon abide.

"Good man," the soft-voiced woman said,
 "To do the thing it chooses
 My friendship likes; so use my wealth
 Till thou thy pearl shalt find.
 He of wisdom is deficient
 Who timely aid refuses,
 And he who does not know a friend
 Even in the dark, is blind.

"Come Kindness near, and speak him fair,
 Who once was my true lover,
 And up and down this crumbling town
 Assist him in his quest.
 Search through the streets, and round the walls,
 Till he at last discover
 The pearl of price and beauty rare
 Wherewith he would be blessed."

With soothing hand came Kindness
 And laid it on his shoulder,
 And smiled upon him as he stood,
 And pressed his wrinkled brow.
 She was like, he thought, a sister,
 Who to memory seemed older,
 But darker, with as gentle eyes,
 That was in heaven now.

“Across the way,” the woman said,
 “Is an ancient monastery,
 Where, cloistered in seclusion,
 Dwells an abbot sad and pale.
 He is my friend: he lives alone;
 But many folk once merry,
 To have him pray their sins away,
 His heavy doors assail.

“With him, good sir, thou may’st abide;
 For I will pay him freely.
 This evening with us he will sup,
 And even now is here!”
 Thereat the abbot entered,
 With restless eyes and steely,
 And speaking to the woman,
 Was given kindly cheer.

To his feet his garb depended
 With a cross and beaded cable;
 But, the deep cowl, to his shoulders
 He pushed from off his head.
 The pallor of his features
 Was heightened by the sable
 Of his monkish, girdled habit;
 But his lips were full and red.

The gray-beard coldly took the hand
 The abbot pale extended,
 And at the board regarded him
 With favor scant and small.
 Betimes the gray guest bade good-night,
 And, to the monk commended,
 Crossed o'er the way, and entered
 The monastery hall.

Here seated in the flicker
 Of a lamp hung from the ceiling,
 The abbot said: "Gray senior,
 Dost thou not know me yet?
 On the road thou me beheldest
 Often in the shadow kneeling.
 Ah! few are they who know me not,
 For I am named Regret."

Past night's dark noon the abbot
 Showed where his guest should slumber;
 Gliding before, he lightly bore
 A bronze Pompeian lamp.
 The gray-beard saw long rows of lore
 The statued halls encumber,
 And, on mediæval windows,
 The night-dews trickle damp.

Thenceforth he met, tho rarely,
 The abbot pale; for, hidden
 In his cell, the monk dejected,
 Brooded ever on the past.
 He had an aged servitor
 Who brought him food when bidden,
 And the guest's lone board replenished
 With profusion to the last.

That night the gray-beard's spirit
 Anchored in the Indian Ocean,
 On the oystered coast of Ceylon,
 Where, with sudden splash and swirl,
 Plunged the naked, swarthy divers;
 And rising with commotion
 From his muddy, shelly harvest,
 One drew a lustrous pearl.

In the morning's misty splendor
 Kindness came, the lovely maiden,
 And led the kindly seeker
 To a ruin old and gray ;
 It was of an arch triumphal,
 Which, with moss and weeds o'erladen,
 High upon it, bore the legend,
 Only truth shall not decay.

Near the arch once stood a temple
 Where, they say, the truth was spoken ;
 For the fane, to Truth erected,
 Knew her worshipers alone.
 Now about the smiling greensward
 Lay the fluted columns broken ;
 But the truth which once they stood for,
 Had a meaning all its own.

Each belief, to him who holds it,
 Is the truth, and seems eternal ;
 Tho' beliefs are birds which slowly
 Hatch their broods and fly away.
 Ammon, Isis, Phœbus, Ormuzd,
 Jove and all the gods supernal,
 Had the ruins of their temples
 In the City of Decay.

In the arch and round the columns,
 Which had been to Truth erected,
 The gray-beard and the maiden
 Sought the pearl of his desire.
 He had hoped to find the jewel,
 By the care of Truth protected,
 Hidden somewhere here, denuded
 Of the restless river's mire.

But in vain; the search availed not:
 Straightway from the place they wended,
 And onward through a street of tombs,
 Nor thought the pearl was there.
 Along the way, on either side,
 The monuments extended,
 And birds among them flooded sweet
 The unregretful air.

Many castles stood in ruins,
 Here and there about the city;
 Their high battlements were fallen,
 And their grassy moats were dry.
 Gone were all the knights and ladies;
 For no lover sang his ditty
 Close beneath the listening windows,
 In the moon's enamored eye.

There have been, in Spain, great castles
 Built by the nimble wizard,
 Who, with neither square nor plumb-line,
 Ever rears a faultless wall;
 But none fairer than once these were,
 Where abode the bat and lizard,
 And where just a word, loud spoken,
 Sometimes caused a tower to fall.

Soon sweet Kindness and the gray-beard
 Came upon a castle olden,
 Which was standing draped with ivy
 Like a goddess with her hair;
 But the cross-barred gate of iron
 All so rustily was holden,
 That they pushed it down and entered
 The stillness mute and bare.

Thick and strong the walls about them
 To the blue sky towered grandly;
 For the floors and roof had rotted
 And in blown dust disappeared.
 Overhead a light cloud drifted,
 And an owlet, perching blandly
 In the shadow, on a corbel,
 Nestled closer as they neared.

To behold this bird Minervan
 On the lewd-faced corbel o'er them,
 The gray-beard thought an omen
 That here his search would end.
 He had hoped that in some castle,
 Like the ruined one before them,
 His delightful, burnished jewel
 Soon his seeking would befriend.

For he knew that in the ruins
 Of men's great anticipations,
 There are many pearls and precious
 Found in wiser after-years;
 But herein his search was fruitless,
 And his heart its sad libations
 Freely poured to disappointment,
 From its crystal cup of tears.

But by Kindness calmed and cherished,
 Now his steps were home directed
 Along an ample avenue
 Where crowds streamed up and down;
 And the maiden showed the gray-beard
 How mankind were all affected
 By the influence which issued
 From the portals of the town.

As the sun his blue path travels,
 Highest minarets and steeples
 Toward him lean, like Guebers bowing
 When he settles to repose;
 And throughout the dusty ages,
 Surely have the restless peoples,
 Westering and migratory,
 Followed his unfading rose.

So this wide-spread sunset city
 Toward it draws the generations;
 Youth, middle-age and ancient
 Hither tend whate'er betides.
 On pale horses gay youth enters,
 Crowned with Spring's associations;
 But cane-in-hand decrepitude
 Oft longest here abides.

Somewhat thus spoke truthful Kindness
 To the gray-beard, walking slowly
 Near the living counter-currents
 That thronged the spacious way.
 He for frequent alms-deeds halted
 At the begging corners lowly,
 Whose sweet gratitude enriched him
 As violets did in May.

In the morning of the morrow,
 Drawn by two black horses prancing,
 The gray-beard and the lady
 Rode to retrospection's halls.
 There was scarce a street or alley
 Where the sun, through windows glancing,
 Lighted not unfading pictures
 Painted on exalted walls.

Everywhere about the city,
 Rose, to retrospection builded,
 Palaces whose dreamy silence
 Held a portion of the past.
 Some were like dark Spain's Alhambra,
 Ceiled with frost-like forms, and gilded;
 Others like the Doges' wonder
 In Venetian azure glassed.

All faced one way; all looked backward
 Up the road and up the river,
 Peering over roof and ruin
 Into Summer's land and Spring's.
 Some by fountains were surrounded,
 In whose rainbow-colored quiver
 Shone a humming-bird-like splendor,
 Burnished blue and twinkling wings.

There in grass the long-thighed hopper
 Clicked his castanets in measure,
 An unrecognized Tithonus
 And lean old pantaloon;
 While the almond-tree in blossom,
 Dropped its snowy petal-treasure,
 And the windows of the buildings
 Were darkened all too soon.

The abodes of retrospection
 Into rooms were each divided,
 And, like the Cretan labyrinth,
 Had doors from halls to halls.
 No fearful thunders roared therein,
 Nor were the folk misguided,
 For each man held his rooms apart,
 And knew their vivid walls.

The pictures of these palaces
 Bore one great artist's *fecit*.
 The Angelo of Memory,
 Whose brush is never still,
 Did all the work, and day by day
 His joy was to increase it,
 Till not a space in any place
 Seemed left for him to fill.

When from halls deceased a tenant,
 His own paintings, glad or dreary,
 He took away, beyond the flood,
 To show his place and age;
 But backward-glancing History,
 Whose eyes are never weary,
 Described the greater pictures
 Upon her deathless page.

The deeds of noble daring
 And of patient self-denial
 Which still were done, and which seemed best
 Of what was left to tell,
 Survived the heel of silence,
 Cheered the world in every trial,
 And murmured of the sea of Love
 In song and story's shell.

When high noon was on the city,
 At a House of Retrospection
 Arrived the kindly woman
 With the gray-beard sere and bent.
 At a word the door was opened,
 And, through halls in each direction,
 With her pleasing guest she wandered,
 On the pictures all intent.

When through her sad past's corridors
 Their walk at last was ended,
 And she the doors had opened wide
 Except a sacred few,
 The woman turned and followed him
 Whom she had so befriended,
 And saw the compass of his heart
 To Heaven and her was true.

He led her through the echoes
 Of his lofty halls, resounding
 To their feet upon the pavement
 Where lay broken cups of joy.
 On either hand, the pictures
 Of his life arose, abounding
 In the painter's richest colors,
 Which strong death can not destroy.

As day, with torch life-giving,
 Was to the sea descending,
 Before the building's porch appeared
 The couple old and gray.
 They saw a cloudy darkness
 And heavy rain impending,
 And, with the birds, they hastened home
 Along the rumbling way.

Against the west the clouds up-pressed
 In black and moving ledges,
 But, in a rift that seemed to lift,
 A splendid rainbow shone.
 It climbed and kissed an ebon mist
 High up with pallid edges,
 While, toward its shore, a white-sailed ship,
 The freightless moon, was blown.

Soon the heavenly keel encountered
 Its mirk doom, and crashing, sinking,
 Left the sky to stormy darkness,
 Lightning, thunder, wind and rain;
 Yet that night the gray-beard weary,
 In his sleep's disordered thinking,
 Deemed the wrecked, bright moon the jewel
 He was seeking to regain.

Through the night and through the morrow
 Poured the gray rain sobbing, sighing,
 While its gusty breath of sorrow
 Tossed the dead leaves to and fro.
 Looked the gray-beard from the casement
 On the leaves and rain-drops flying,
 And a wind of self-abasement
 In his spirit seemed to blow.

Kindness, seeking his apartment,
 Took him fruits for toothsome pleasure,
 Apples crimson, apples golden,
 Ripe as Juno's and as sweet,
 And she cheered his rainy feelings
 From the overflowing measure
 Of her favor, smiling on him,
 Seated humbly at his feet.

When the marshaled clouds retreated,
 And the armies of the morning,
 With shining shields and banners,
 Were advancing o'er the hill;
 When the flowers, that with beauty
 The city were adorning,
 Looked up to greet the victor
 With the fragrance they distill,

The lady and the gray-beard
 With mild Kindness, their attendant,
 Rode out to see the palace
 Where the emperor, Time, abode.
 For Decay was chief of cities
 Which upon him were dependent,
 And through its streets imperial
 His bounty often flowed.

"The emperor a triumph
 Has proclaimed, to show his splendor,"
 Said the lady to the gray-beard,
 As they wheeled along the way ;
 "Great have been his recent conquests,
 But, like the witch of Endor,
 He will raise the dead by magic,
 And his fateful power display.

"Time, besides his son, white Winter,
 Has three pure and loving daughters :
 Proud, bright-eyed, fruit-bosomed Autumn,
 Summer dark with sun and dew,
 And young Spring with eyes of blue.
 These, along the ebbing waters,
 He has given each a country,
 Good to dwell in, fair to view.

"No Lear he among his children ;
 He is still their ruler rigid ;
 For his will throughout the queendoms
 Is respected and obeyed ;
 Thus it is too in the kingdom
 Of the northern whiteness frigid ;
 For his scepter is of iron,
 Tho with velvet softness swayed."

Along the way the gray-beard
 Cheered his tender heart with flowers,
 Which at either hand were blooming
 In the black and fertile soil.
 Dark decay is beauty's mother;
 For the daughter turns to bowers
 Ruined temples and gray towers,
 With a tendril-twining toil.

Every form is matter's dwelling,
 And as soon as one is wasted,
 From decay another rises,
 Changing like the forms of truth :
 Matter round the bent world wanders ;
 It of every joy has tasted,
 Finding in decay renewal,
 Fresh delights and hopeful youth.

Suddenly upon the gray-beard
 Burst the sight of Time's great palace,
 Rising proudly in the distance,
 On a hill's enameled crest.
 Arm-high, over all the hillside,
 Every lily raised its chalice,
 As if standing at a banquet
 Pledging an especial guest.

Somewhat like the regal dwelling,
Where abides the crowned Castilian,
Looking out on sunny Madrid,
The impassioned heart of Spain,
Stood the emperor's white palace
Hung with banners of vermillion,
And a clock-tower rose amidst it
With a bell of solemn strain.

In a ripe, adjoining meadow,
Trode an old man mowing, swaying
With the keen scythe's crescent motion,
As he laid the long years low.
In a vaulted stable near him
Stood the sun's black horses, neighing
For the provender he cut them,
Which not elsewhere would grow.

Like the halls of retrospection,
Facing eastward, up the river,
Stood the palace, and behind it
Ran the city's mighty wall.
This had towers and bastions many;
But no soldier from his quiver
Drew an arrow to defend one
When it tottered to its fall.

Where it fell it formed a passage
 For the troops of vegetation
 To storm the standing battlements
 With verdant shields and spears.
 Kindness and the gray-beard clambered
 Over débris to a station
 On the wall, and wide before them
 Lay the city worn with years.

Far as the eye could northward pierce
 And eastward stretched the city,
 With ruined baths, arched aqueducts,
 And pagan, pillared fanes.
 On these and feudal castles
 Hung the ivy-vails of Pity;
 For she likes to brood on ruins,
 And with beauty hide their stains.

Along Time's hill, which bordered
 The black, mysterious ocean,
 Ran the city wall, where Kindness
 And the gray-beard gazed around.
 Far below them, on the waters,
 Which had neither wave nor motion,
 Lay a twilight, but it deepened
 Out to midnight vapor-bound.

On another day came Kindness
 With the gray-beard, and, descending
 To the shore along the hillside,
 By the dark sea walked awhile.
 In the shallow, marshy reaches,
 Where white ibises were bending,
 Grew the lotus and papyrus
 Which have vanished from the Nile.

In the hillside steep and rocky,
 Vined with paths of deep reflection,
 Countless tombs were hewed, whose mummies
 Knelt in life to Horus true.
 He, to everything that perished,
 Brought fresh bloom and resurrection,
 Son of golden Hathor, goddess
 Of the heavens soft and blue.

Egypt thought the soul departed
 With life brutal was encumbered;
 But it would again be human
 When three millenniums fled.
 With their self-renewing beetles,
 The mummies here had slumbered
 Late, and past the time allotted,
 Yet they woke not from the dead.

In the tombs, and on the sea-beach,
Sought the gray-beard for his jewel.
He was sure that he would find it
By the dusky, silent shore;
For the fruitlessness of seeking
Gave his flame of hope new fuel;
Yet he clambered to a gateway,
Unrewarded as before.

On the arch an unknown motto,
In the weedy stones and rotten,
Ran in symbol-words engraven,
Facing outward on the deep;
While inside this coastern entrance,
Busts of great men long forgotten,
And their statues, marred and broken,
Lay unvalued on the steep.

But now behind the ocean
Glowed the tireless day, declining;
Yet he cast no ray upon it
To dispel its dreadful night.
Every tower in the city
In his ruby glance was shining;
But the dull deep and its vapors
Were the darker for the light.

On the coast the wall was weakest,
Holding up a slight resistance ;
For a tidal-wave incoming,
At a blow, had dashed it down.
It showed the thin partition,
And how perilous the distance,
Between the dead, waste silence
And the retrospective town.

With his lovable companion
Went the gray-beard on the morrow,
Toward the key along the river
And the rotting wooden piers.
He was feebling in the climate,
And her strength he had to borrow ;
For he leaned upon her shoulder
With the weight of trembling years.

It was beautiful to see them
As they through the old streets wended.
She had eyes of dawn the mildest,
And with heaven her smile was filled.
Her fair and clear complexion
With the snowy lilies blended,
While at her word a flower would bloom,
And raging storms were stilled.

Sometimes on the way a building
Tenantless and long neglected,
With sunken roof and mildewed beams,
Would fall across the street.
Upon the mounds, that thus were formed,
The bandit weeds collected,
Which cut and tore the passers-by,
And oft enforced retreat.

From out a lofty gateway
Of the wall beside the river,
Came forth the kindly couple
And went along the key.
They saw the dead leaves, drifting
In the black, thick water, quiver
And eddy round the slimy piers,
To ebb away to sea.

All the commerce was departed ;
Only now and then a vessel
Down the wide, straight river sailing,
Brought its cargo to the town.
At the piers lay ships dismantled,
That no more the winds would wrestle ;
Half-sunk, punky hulks unpitchen,
Which the tide would soon suck down.

Here, with every care, the gray-beard
Sought his mystic pearl delightful,
On the piers and on the vessels,
Wheresoe'er it might have lain.
He had thought that, down the river,
For its waiting owner rightful,
Some sailor might have brought it;
But the search was still in vain.

Presently the gray-beard, raising
His mild eyes to scan the distance,
Saw at hand a sail approaching,
Which beside him soon lay moored.
Men make faith of what they hope for;
And, that his foot-sore persistence
Someway soon would reap fruition,
By his heart he was assured.

Straightway went he to the master,
Who upon the deck was standing,
And inquired, "Sir, can you tell me
Of my pearl that long is lost?"
Then the master, from the vessel
Stepping out upon the landing,
Answered him, "Describe the jewel,
Which should be of wondrous cost."

When the gray-beard had outlined it,
 As he might some fading vision,
 Pensively the river-farer

Cast his glance upon the ground,
 Saying, "Sir, I have not seen it;
 But there lies in lands elysian,
 One whose name to me is holy;
 She a pearl like yours had found.

"She the winsome jewel lost not;
 In my heart I always see her
 Radiant as an angel with it.

She who wore it was my bride.
 Woe befell me: bride and jewel
 To a city fairer, freer,
 Lying far beyond these portals,
 Soon departed from my side."

Not again upon the river
 Went this master's vessel sailing;
 For, when he had dismantled it,
 He quitted it for aye:
 And he met not, ever after,
 The gray-beard who, fast failing,
 Had perforce to cease his rambles
 In the City of Decay.

Day by day the gray-beard wasted,
 Steadily infirmer growing
 Till he left his room no longer,
 Nor, at last, his patient bed;
 But the lady and sweet Kindness,
 To his care themselves bestowing,
 Cheered his sorrow, smoothed his pillow,
 And kind comforts round him spread.

But when came the day of triumph,
 With its balmy air and golden,
 They moved him to the window,
 And the casement opened wide.
 In the street below, the people,
 To the emperor beholden,
 Filled the walks, and on the housetops
 Thronged to see the pomp and pride.

Presently came heralds riding,
 Through their silver trumpets crying,
 "Time is passing! Time is passing!
 Live the emperor! He is here!"
 Countless pretty baby children,
 Laughing, sighing, running, flying,
 Led the pageant; while sweet music
 From a distance charmed the ear.

Naked were the infant Moments,
 But with fruit-tree blossoms belted,
 Which were ever snowing petals
 And bestrewing all the ground.
 Then came lissome older children,
 By the flying blossoms pelted,—
 Graceful Hours, and twelve were rosy;
 Twelve were veiled and starry crowned.

Then the Days came, budding maidens:
 They had hair of morning brightness,
 And about with night were skirted;
 Some days dark and others fair.
 At their heels the Months close followed;
 In their steps was less of lightness;
 On her arm a shield of silver
 Each Month lifted in the air.

Then came Spring, the queen delightful,
 Crowned with violets and arbutus,
 Robed with woven flowers and fragrance,
 Crocuses, anemones,
 Tulips, hyacinths and lilacs,
 More than all the wealth of Plutus;
 While, of marigolds and daisies,
 Hung her tunic to her knees.

To her next came swarthy Summer
 Dowered with beauty Cleopatra,
 Fervid, full of storms and sunshine,
 And with bosom deep and round.
 Like a ruby shone the dog-star
 On the forehead of the matron,
 While her gown, her form revealing,
 Trailed with roses on the ground.

Then came luscious, mellow Autumn
 With a sickle for a scepter,
 On a throne of sheaves and grape-vines,
 Canopied with boughs of fruit.
 Loud the flail announced her progress,
 And fed the mill, his fellow,
 While the season changed her verdure
 To a gold and crimson suit.

Next was freezing, blustering Winter,
 In an icy chariot riding,
 Drawn by northern, snowy horses,
 Each with long and flowing mane.
 Crowned with icicles, the ruler,
 In his muffled ermine hiding,
 Sat and frowned, his lean limbs palsied
 By his breath's benumbing pain.

Pale, the gray-beard at the window
Felt the frosty breath, and shivered
Like a sere leaf sadly clinging

In December to a tree.
When the cold king had gone by him,
He was from the chill delivered;
And the emperor, Time, approaching
With his horses, he could see.

These were dazzling in their brightness,
For, to view their shapes correctly,
Hurt the eyes, and changed the horses
From bright color into black.
They the sun-god's were, and often
Glanced at Winter indirectly;
But proudly drew the emperor
Whose scythe hung down his back.

As he came, the gray-beard knew him,
And beheld in him the mower
Of the meadow by the palace
Where the giant clock appears.
His chariot resplendent,
Moving faster, never slower,
Had wheels which, spoked with happenings,
Were like revolving years.

Bald was the gaunt old emperor;
 But he had a forelock snowy,
 By which the wisely bold have dared
 To take him when they could.
 He wore no crown; his scepter
 Was a gilded clock-hand showy;
 While at his feet, with running sand,
 An ancient hour-glass stood.

With Time in his great chariot,
 To show allegiance duly,
 Rode three; and one, a woman,
 Was fair beyond belief.
 She to the niggard emperor
 Was wife, and loved him truly;
 Yet spent his gold as if for it
 She might not come to grief.

She was Life, and on the lowest
 Lavished oft her priceless treasure,
 Oft withholding from the dearest
 What she gave to bird and beast.
 In her hand she held a goblet
 Filled with sadness and sweet pleasure,
 Which she gave to all to drink of,
 At the outset in the East.

She the gray-beard at the window
 Saw, and toward him reached the chalice,
 Smiling at him with a glory
 Which outshone all else around ;
 But the figure like a shadow,
 Hooded, mantled—as in malice—
 In the splendid chariot riding—
 Dashed the liquid to the ground.

This was Death, Life's dread companion,
 Bound to Time by icy fetters ;
 But between Death and the woman
 Stood a comely youth, her slave.
 He had eyes toward heaven rolling,
 And in nature, as in letters,
 Read the open page before him
 With a wisdom deep and grave.

Like the potent, skillful genii,
 In the story of Aladdin,
 That were faithful in the service
 Of the egg, the lamp, or ring,
 To the human clay enchanted,
 He was slave, and strove to gladden
 Life who had it: in a moment,
 What she asked for, he would bring.

He achieved remotest wonders,—
 Wielded Nature's restless forces,
Built the palaces and cities,
 Bridged the rivers, sailed the air,
Tamed hot steam to fetch and carry,
 Traced the dim stars in their courses,
And taught the crinkling fire of storms
 His messages to bear.

Not genii-like forbidding
 To the kindly and true-hearted
Was this fettered youth and splendid,
 Life's strange slave whom men call Thought.
High of forehead, pale and silent,
 With a smile his lips oft parted;
And his eyes, large, dark and dreamy,
 From high heaven their beauty caught.

Close behind Time's chariot followed
 Mankind primitive and savage,
Of the geologic epoch
 When grim Winter plowed the earth.
With the great bear and the mammoth,
 Which at will were wont to ravage,
They had been contemporary,
 And were brutal from their birth.

With the skins of fierce beasts slaughtered
They were round the middle girded ;
Their curled beards swept down their bosoms,
And their long hair streamed behind.
They had dwelt in gloomy caverns,
And with rudest speech were worded ;
Yet from even them outglimmered
Dawnings of prescient mind.

After them came those who labored
To upbuild sky-seeking Babel,
With Noah old, who eastward went,
And founded China's power.
Him close behind was Misraim,
Son of Ham, called black in fable ;
And Misraim went to Egypt
From the folly of the tower.

After these came gods, or rather
Famous folk of mythic story,
Who, for mighty deeds or passions,
By mankind were deified.
Here were Zeus and Apollo,
Venus fair and Neptune hoary,
Thor, the hammerer, and Odin
Stalking by with stately pride.

Then the gray-beard at the window
 Saw the monarchs of dead nations,
 With the shepherd kings of Egypt,
 And capricious Pharaohs—
 Saw those of peerless Babylon,
 And the voiceless generations
 Who with the kings had come and gone
 With all their joys and woes.

And the gray-beard at death's window
 Saw the colony Egyptian,
 That, settling rugged Attica,
 Gave grace to art and lore.
 Then not surprised he recognized,
 By Homer's clear description,
 The warriors who in the strife
 For Helen fought of yore.

In that ever-moving pageant,
 Far surpassing every other,
 He saw the ship of Æneas,
 The prince upon the prow—
 Saw Romulus and Remus
 With their lupine foster-mother—
 Saw kingly Cincinnatus
 Standing humbly by his plow.

With his army, Alexander
 In bright armor and regalia,
 Preceded Afric Hannibal
 Who pierced the Roman state.
 Then came ambitious Cæsar,
 At the feast of Lupercalia,
 Pushing back the golden bauble
 Which awoke the dagger's hate.

Now the gray-beard at the window
 Saw a sight which wildly thrilled him,
 Three dead bodies on three crosses
 On dark Calvary lifted high.
 In looking on the Central Face,
 A deep amazement filled him,
 And crying out, "THE TRUTHSAYER!"
 Fell backward with a sigh.

Rose the lady in the darkness,
 Found the gray-beard's peaceful pillow,
 And pressed upon his chilly lips
 A benedictive kiss.
 He was dead; and like the whiteness
 Of a broken, flowing billow,
 Fell his hair back from his forehead,
 While his hands were clasped in bliss.

With a fair foot resting lightly
On the high wall of the city,
Where the masonry looked seaward,
Near the palace-towers of Time,
Robed in splendor stood an angel
With benignant arms of pity,
Long, outspreading wings of brightness,
And face and mien sublime.

His stature was colossal;
He was taller than the tower
Of an organ-voiced cathedral;
Yet so perfect was his form,
That its size gave greater beauty
And a sense of wondrous power,
As huge cloud on cloud up-piling
Adds more grandeur to the storm.

Just above him, back a measure,
On a level with his shoulder,
Stood a wondrous, gleaming angel,
Like a brother of the first.
O'er the second rose a third joy,
Then a fourth, till the beholder,
Gazing upward, knew a hundred
On his raptured vision burst.

Thus the great seraphic stairway
 Reached far out above the ocean,
 Upward, every step an angel,
 To the sapphire of the sky.
 In the light the argent pinions
 Beat the air with gentle motion,
 And the robes of glory fluttered,
 Trailing downward from on high.

As the shining stairs ascended,
 To the vision they diminished,
 Tho alike they were majestic,
 And as one their splendors shone.
 All the angels, gazing earthward
 On the pageant still unfinished,
 In their winged effulgence waited
 To receive and crown their own.

Now the freed soul of the gray-beard
 In her bosom bearing gently,
 Came dear Kindness to the seraph
 With his foot upon the wall.
 Into his soft hands she gave it,
 And he looked on it intently;
 For to him it was an infant
 New-born, helpless, frail, and small.

To the angel next above him
 He reached it when he blessed it,
 And that splendor took the spirit
 And gave it to the third ;
 To the fourth the third joy raised it,
 And it grew as each caressed it,
 While young wings upon its shoulders
 Started out as on a bird.

Upward, onward thus they bore it
 To the tenth seraphic landing,
 Where the angel gave the spirit
 A robe of light and truth.
 And he crowned it with a jewel,
 As it by his side was standing,
 The jewel which at last was found,
 The lustrous pearl of youth !

Then Kindness, gazing upward,
 Saw the radiant youth ascending,
 Along the wide-winged stairway,
 Toward the glory-parted skies.
 He had spread his spotless pinions,
 Filled with love and peace unending ;
 And she watched his heavenward journey
 Till he vanished from her eyes.

THE END

Yet she heard the strains of music
 Which adown the stairway sounded,
 And saw the burst of brighter light
 When the heavenly gates were raised.
 She, with a rhythmic beat of wings,
 Was by seraphim surrounded
 Who sang that she should join them,
 And on her fondly gazed.

But true Kindness was contented
 Still to bide within Time's portal,
 Knowing that she had a Father
 In the purer world above—
 Love unselfish, universal,
 Love celestial and immortal,
 In the city built of jewels,
 Whose foundation is of Love.



THE SPIRIT OF THE MOUNTAIN.

The Poet.

Who art thou, mighty spirit,
That, in the twilight deep,
Makest a deeper twilight,
Invading tired sleep?
The new moon, like a jewel,
Shines on thy forehead high,
And shows thy wavy outline
Along the mellow sky.

Thy ample sides are shaggy
With maple, oak, and pine;
Thy foot is shod with verdure;
Thy breath is more than wine.
The brooklet is thy laughter;
The light cloud likes thy brow:
Speak from thy breezy summit,
Say, spirit, who art thou?

THE
END

The Spirit of the Mountain.

I am the far-seen mountain
 Before thee towering high,
 Where, peak beyond peak reaching,
 Rise others such as I.

Our dark-blue robes at twilight
 We draw about our forms ;
 Ours is the boundless quiet
 That dwells above the storms.

I am a patient spirit
That worked beneath the sea,
And, from hills pre-existing,
Built up the hills to be.
To shifting sands I added
Pebble and limy shell,
And laid, in briny chasms,
My deep foundations well.

The Poet.

O Spirit of the Mountain!
O toiler deep of yore!
Vast is thy past behind thee,
Thy future vast before.



We call thee everlasting;
Our life is like a day;
Are time and tide against thee?
Must thou too pass away?

The Spirit of the Mountain.

I see thy generation,
That withers as the rose,
And feel the isolation
Which wraps unmoved repose.
What through uncounted ages
I wrought in sunless deeps,
Now, with the suns of heaven,
Its lofty vigils keeps!

Yet slowly, ever slowly,
I melt again, to be
Lost in my grand, gray lover,
The wild, unresting sea.
I can not hear his moaning;
But know that, on the shore,
He flings his spray-arms toward me,
And calls me evermore.

ONTIORA.

MOONS on moons ago,
In the sleep, or night, of the moon,
When evil spirits have power,
The monster, Ontiora,
Came down in the dreadful gloom.
The monster came stalking abroad,
On his way to the sea for a bath,
For a bath in the salt, gray sea.

In Ontiora's breast
Was the eyrie of the winds,
Eagles of measureless wing,
Whose screeching, furious swoop
Startled the sleeping dens.
His hair was darkness unbound,
Thick, and not mooned nor starred.
His head was plumed with rays
Plucked from the sunken sun.

To him the forests of oak,
Of maple, hemlock and pine,
Were as grass which a bear treads down.
He trod them down as he came,
As he came from his white-peak'd tent,
At whose door, ere he started abroad,
He drew a flintless arrow
Across the sky's strip'd bow,
And shot at the evening star.

He came like a frowning cloud,
That fills and blackens the west.
He was wroth at the bright-plumed sun,
And his pale-faced wife, the moon,
With their twinkling children, the stars;
But he hated the red-men all,
The Iroquois, fearless and proud,
The Mohegans, stately and brave,
And trod them down in despite,
As a storm treads down the maize.
He trod the red-men down,
Or drove them out of the land
As winter drives the birds.

When near the King of Rivers,
The river of many moods,

To Ontiora thundered
Manitou out of a cloud.
Between the fountains crystal
And the waters that reach to the sky,
Manitou, Spirit of Good,
To the man-shaped monster spoke:
"You shall not go to the sea,
But be into mountains changed,
And wail in the blast, and weep
For the red-men you have slain.
You shall lie on your giant back
While the river rises and falls,
And the tide of years on years
Flows in from a depthless sea."

Then Ontiora replied:
"I yield to the heavy doom;
Yet what am I but a type
Of a people who are to come?
Who as with a bow will shoot
And bring the stars to their feet,
And drive the red-man forth
To the Land of the Setting Sun."

So Ontiora wild,
By eternal silence touched,

Fell backward in a swoon,
 And was changed into lofty hills,
 The Mountains of the Sky.
 This is the pleasant sense
 Of Ontiora's name,
 "The Mountains of the Sky."
 His bones are rocks and crags,
 His flesh is rising ground,
 His blood is the sap of trees.

On his back, with one knee raised,
 He lies with his face to the sky,
 A monstrous human shape
 In the Catskills high and grand.
 And from the valley below,
 Where the slow tide ebbs and flows,
 You can mark his knee and breast,
 His forehead beetling and vast,
 His nose and retreating chin.
 But his eyes, they say, are lakes,
 Whose tears flow down in streams,
 Which seam and wrinkle his cheeks,
 For the fate he endures, and for shame
 Of the evil he did, as he stalked
 In the vanquished and hopeless moon,
 Moons on moons ago.

LIBERTY.

WHERE the Platte and the Laramie mingle,
With waters as pure as dew,
Wooing down from the Rocky Mountains
The dreamy, eternal blue;
Where the wild-rose sweet and the balsam
Scent the glad, fresh prairie air,
And the breeze, like an elk, comes leaping
From the sand-hills dry and bare,

Stands the frontier fort, and behind it
The gray-beard mountains rise,
Whence the sudden storm, in its fury,
Far out o'er the valley flies.
There it rides, like the red-man, swiftly,
On an uncurbed horse of cloud,
While it shoots long arrows of lightning,
And utters its war-cry loud.

The Sioux were fierce, cruel and moody;
They hated the pale-face much
For taking the lands where they hunted,
Which he pledged that he would not touch.
So they sought to unite all red-men
Against the invading foe,
And, for Indian fame and honor,
Strike one more pitiless blow.

The great chief of the Sioux was kingly;
He rode undaunted and free;
He was tall, broad-shouldered, fine-featured,
And as straight as a pine could be.
When in the dusky-red council,
He roused with his burning themes,
A breeze through his utterance freshened,
With voices of trees and streams.

In the war which he fiercely incited,—
While its flying arrows increased,
And murder and fire on the border
Angered the populous East,
Near the fort where Laramie water
Is wed to a bolder stream,
Dwelt the Sioux chief's beautiful daughter,
As richly dark as a dream.

She was tall, she was formed superbly,
With a face so true in each line,
That, seen looking upward in profile,
It seemed of marble divine.
In her eyes was a languid splendor,
The dawning of young desire;
And those eyes, like the fawn's, were tender,
Yet filled with smoldering fire.

On her forehead a fillet beaded
Bound the trailing night of her hair,
And her shoulders, perfectly molded,
Like her graceful arms, were bare.
The flowers and the stars, in bead-work,
Her beauty were made to serve,
And her negligent blanket discovered
Her bosom's voluptuous curve.

She was mistress of two white ponies,
And when, on either of these,
She urged him to galloping swiftness,
Her long hair streamed in the breeze.
Then she seemed like the child of freedom,
Liberty, and her employ
Was only to roam her dominion,
Embodied with beauty and joy.

Begot of the sunset and freedom,
And rich in the red-man's lore,
She knew the antelope's hoof-print,
The birds, and the plumage they wore.
She could throw the lariat deftly,
And bring to earth, at a blow,
The prairie-hen low-flying over,
Or shaft the stag and the doe.

In her voice the tongue of Dakota
Was as sweet as the thrush's song;
She spoke, too, the words which the Mayflower
From beyond sea brought along.
She read many books and news-letters,
And each was a cup to her sight,
For she drank from the waters of knowledge
With quenchless thirst and delight.

At the fort, from the homes of Ohio,
Were volunteer soldiers, who came
To cover the venturesome settlers
From the red-man's deadly aim.
With the rest came a young lieutenant,
Dark-eyed, handsome and pale,
And the Sioux chief's daughter, beholding,
Felt love for him rise and prevail.

It may be that some sense of pity
First fastened on him her gaze;
For she saw a mystery in him,
The shadow of vanished days;
And wherever she went or tarried,
Albeit he was not near,
In evergreen dells of remembrance
His image would softly appear.

She could never escape its presence;
It dwelt in her inmost heart,
Tho, in moments of bitter passion,
She wildly bade it depart.
But Love is far stronger and deeper
Than anger, sorrow and scorn;
He drives them back huddled and cowering
Before his arrows of morn.

Like a mountain-lake fringed with aspens,
Which glasses the splendid sun,
So clear that the pebbles down deepest
May be counted, one by one,—
So pure that the trout at the bottom
To every fear are unknown,
So clear and so pure was her spirit,
To whose depths love's sun now shone.

When often the comely young soldier
 Had seen the maiden, and knew
That daily she eagerly watched him
 With fond eyes wistful and true,
He spoke to her kindly, and praised her
 For her beauty dark and rare,
And gave her a rose of the prairie
 To twine in her raven hair.

Then into his eyes far looking,
 She fancied she saw the sky
Of an infinite sadness in them,
 And answered him with a sigh.
She set the glad rose in her girdle,
 And, taking him by the hand,
They wandered along by the river
 Which runs o'er the golden sand.

Thenceforth he turned from the maiden ;
 He felt that he could not divide
The love of his life for one woman,
 Nor make another his bride.
This other he tortured with coldness,
 And his slighting, downcast eyes ;
Yet she followed him oft, at a distance,
 With sad and vacant surprise.

On horseback they met once at sunset
On a lonely, wooded road,
And her heart, with its pent-up feeling,
In words and tears overflowed :
“ Oh, why do you treat me so coldly ?
And why do you spurn a friend ?
Am I not an Indian princess ?
And what have I done to offend ? ”

“ You have not offended,” he answered,
“ I have read in your eyes, I suppose ;
But to pluck a red rose and discard it,
Were basely unjust to the rose.
I would not be false to your kindness ;
I know I shall treasure it long ;
Yet, for us to be often together,
Would be unseemly and wrong.”

“ I know,” she replied, “ that the white man
Despises the dark, red race,
And hunts down our tribes, and destroys them,
Or drives them from place to place.
You treat us as fanged wolf, or badger,
Which on the plains skulks and roams.
Is it strange that we follow the war-path
When driven out of our homes ?

“ We go to the wall, being weakest,
And die in the pools of our gore.
Our desperate path is weary ;
Our feet and our hearts are sore.
I know that mankind are all brothers,
And why should they not agree ?
Befriend us, be true to us, love us,
And of us learn to be free !

“ We can teach even that ; for the pale-face
Of freedom has much to learn,
Still a slave to the past's rude customs,
Which time and thought must o'erturn.
Tho he comes to the red-man's country
The joy of freedom to find,
He brings his slavery with him,
A vassal still, in his mind.

“ I know that not father nor mother
Should separate lovers true,
Much less should imported race-hatred
Which, here, you ought not to renew.
Break away from the bondage of custom ;
Fear not to be wholly free.
Even I am Liberty, dearest !
Oh, turn and behold her in me ! ”

He looked at the mountains majestic
 In perennial crowns of snow ;
 He saw the red splendor of sunset
 Along them glitter and glow,
 And he answered : " O bronze-dark critic,
 The light of liberty flies
 Before us onward forever,
 Like light of the western skies.

" We follow in fetters of custom
 Which we can not disregard ;
 For rebellion tightens them on us,
 And makes them galling and hard.
 But here is your wigwam, and by it
 Your mother who loves you so well.
 Forget me ; turn from me hereafter—
 Good-night, and forever farewell ! "

Forget him ! Do deer of the forest
 Forget the lick or the spring ?
 Do eagles forget the broad sunshine ?
 Or bees where the flower-bells swing ?
 She could not forget him ; but sighing,
 Said softly, fondly, " Adieu ! "
 And, among the trees and their shadows,
 He went as the sun from her view.

He went, but his lingering image
 Haunted the house of her mind ;
While a longing, like thirst, to be near him,
 With the roots of her life entwined.
On her pine-bough and wolf-skin pallet
 She soon was with him in dreams,
And the sound of his voice was more tender
 Than murmurs of leaves and streams.

As a traveler, lost on the prairie,
 Gains the top of some low divide,
And gazing far into the distance,
 O'er the level on every side,
Can find neither succor nor guidance,
 But stands in the hopeless maze,
And helplessly plucks the sage-brush,
 Treasuring some of its sprays :

So, lost on love's measureless prairie,
 The beautiful Indian girl
Looked round on the dim horizon,
 Her thoughts in a deep, wild whirl,
And beholding no path nor succor,
 Hopeless, helpless, depressed,
She plucked at the words of her loved one,
 And treasured some in her breast.

But day after day the red maiden,
 Arraying herself with care,
Would clasp round her arms silver bracelets,
 And glimmer with beads her hair;
Then would go to the fort, and be willing
 To seek her dwelling again,
If she only had looked on her loved one
 Riding along with his men.

She would sit long hours on his doorstep
 To see him come out and go by,
And Pity's sweet self had grown sadder
 Watching her out of the sky.
Oft she followed the soldier meekly
 With a fawn-like glance of fear,
As if he might even deny her
 The gladness of being so near.

If the strong and unselfish goddess
 That long ago dwelt in Rome
Were seeking to be incarnate
 And to dwell in her Western home,
What form would she take? Whose body
 Would best with her soul agree?
And where, in the land of her favor,
 Would her truest habitat be?

She would take the form of a maiden
 Tinged by the sunset skies,
 Lithe, graceful, faultlessly molded,
 And with dark and tender eyes.
 She would choose the wide sea of the prairie,
 And the mountainous Western wild,
 As the place for her life to dwell in,
 And be free and pure as a child.

And would she not love the people
 Seeking her over the deep?
 Who fought her wars, and delighted
 Her name to honor and keep?
 She surely would hold them the dearest
 Of all that the new age gave,
 And would choose from among them a lover
 Handsome, youthful and brave.

They told the great chief of his daughter,
 As he rode with his daring band,
 And he grieved at the fond behavior
 Of the pride of all the land.
 He sent to her friends and her mother
 To take the maiden away
 To the country of Powder River,
 Where a camp of his people lay.

He bade them not fail to amuse her,
In hope to have her depart
From the profitless passion that ruffled
The rose of her gentle heart.
She went with them humbly and tearless;
But a somber and boundless cloud
Settled down on the land of her spirit,
And wrapped it as in a shroud.

She silently rode her white palfrey;
She did not smile nor complain;
From the cloudy waste country of sadness,
They strove to win her in vain.
She touched not the food which they brought her,
Who all were tender and kind.
They reached the red camp by the river;
But ever she grieved and pined.

As the brook by the trail in summer,
In the rainless glare of the day,
Runs slowly on, faintlier, thinner,
The maiden wasted away.
Deep, deep is true love, and humblest
Of all life's household and care;
Unworldly, it asks only likeness
To lead it away from despair.

In the dawn, a courier, foam-flecked,
 Reached the Sioux chief's war-tent door,
And told him his daughter was dying,
 And longed to behold him once more.
Away, over prairie and mountain,
 Not pausing by night nor by day,
Sped the chief to the camp by the river
 And knelt where the maiden lay.

Of buffalo-robcs, her wigwam
 Stood under a sad pine-tree,
In a wood at the foot of a defile,
 From the winds a covert free.
A pine-tassel carpet and antlers
 Adorned the soft nest within,
And the wicker-work couch was covered
 With the gray wolf's shaggy skin.

The tawny-haired robe of a puma
 Before the low couch was spread.
As the warrior knelt upon it,
 The blighted rose raised her head.
Then laying her hands on his shoulders,
 To the sad eyes bending above,
She looked up with changeless affection,
 And told her heart-broken love.

"Dear father," she said, "I am going
 Across the greatest divide—
 Across the dark range of death's mountains
 To the parks on the other side.
 In that country we shall be driven
 Away from our homes no more.
 I shall be at rest with my kindred
 Who have silently gone before.

"In the beautiful land of spirits
 I shall wait for you, father dear,
 Where the birds sing of love requited
 Throughout the snowless year.
 In a little while you will join me;
 Your burden is heavy to bear;
 You are growing old and care-worn,
 And white as mist is your hair.

"One overshadowing favor,
 Dear father, your daughter craves:
 Of all the chiefs, you are the greatest,
 And are first of many braves.
 I pray you go on the war-path
 To slay the white men no more;
 They are countless as leaves of the forest,
 Or waves on the far-off shore.

"Oh, spare our unfortunate people,
 And cause the fell war to cease;
 Take a little rest from life's battle,
 Ere you go to unbroken peace.
 And I would that no war hereafter
 Might lift its merciless crest
 Between our proud Sioux and the nation
 Of him that I love the best.

"When my spirit has gone, noble father,
 Take this poor body of mine,
 Discarded, heart-broken and wasted—
 The withered branch of a vine,
 And lay it to rest on the hillside
 Where the clinging wild-vines dwell,
 At the fort by Laramie River
 Where I learned to love so well.

"From distant, wonderful countries
 The pale-faces thought it good
 To come to our land, seeking only
 So say and do as they would.
 They made them a name for the blessing
 They sought, and deem so fair;
 But we have no word of its meaning,
 Although we have breathed it like air.

"The name is Liberty, father ;
 A name to the captive divine.
 Henceforth call me Liberty only,
 And make the loved name mine.
 And when our brave people, in pity,
 Chant the death-song round my head,
 Let them turn to the east their faces,
 And mourn for Liberty dead."

In sorrow too deep to be spoken,
 The great chief hastened to give
 The wished-for pledge to his daughter ;
 But bade her look up and live.
 He called her Liberty fondly,
 And said that she must not cease :
 But in vain ; for at dawn, on the morrow,
 Her lamp flickered out in peace.

Then straightway they killed her two ponies,
 To bear, to the spirits' dim land,
 The hovering ghost of the maiden,
 And they put some beads in her hand.
 Two days and two nights they bewailed her
 With dolorous song and shout ;
 Then, in buffalo-robes her body
 They bound and corded about.

They lifted it to their shoulders,
 With its light, wicker-work bier,
 And went on their fortnight's journey,
 Through the winter white and drear.
 Thrice a hundred dusky-red mourners
 Slowly rode in the funeral train,
 And the death-song at night round their camp-fires
 They sang to a sad, wild strain :

"She is dead : the pale-face has slain her,
 Our Liberty sweet and pure.
 He spurned her who most should have loved her,
 And gave us much to endure.
 Like the traveler lost on the prairie
 Whose bounds he can not descry,
 Hungering, thirsting, forsaken,
 She found naught left but to die."

They crossed the monotonous prairie,
 And sharply the blizzard blew
 O'er that wilderness coyote-haunted,
 While the blinding fine snow flew.
 It ceased, and the silence around them,
 And their quickly freezing breath,
 Made it seem that they were traversing
 The pallid frontier of death.

They came to the mingling rivers,
And saw, on the other side,
The fort with the flag waving o'er it,
In starry, indolent pride.
They sent a young warrior over,
Who made the humble request
That before the fort, on the hillside,
The chief's dead daughter might rest.

With kindness the garrison met them,
As, up the white river's bank,
The requiem mournfully chanting,
They solemnly rode in rank.
The soldiers had garnished the quarters
With flags and small arms and great ;
In the midst, on a flag-spread table,
The body was laid in state.

Words of sympathy and of welcome
The white to the red men said ;
And the chaplain, with eloquent pity,
Touchingly spoke of the dead.
In the fading tongue of Dakota
The famous Sioux chief replied,
And proclaimed that, with his daughter,
Hate's daughter, the war, had died.

"I have given," he said, "my promise
 From strife's fierce path to abstain :
 And were the hopelessness of resistance
 And claims of policy vain
 To make me stay firm in my purpose
 From further warfare to cease,
 Then my pledge to my dying daughter
 Would force me to keep the peace."

In her praise, flocks of winged words fluttered ;
 And when the sunset's fine gold
 Streamed down, from the passionless mountains,
 Pacific riches untold,
 The body was borne by the white-men,
 Who the red-men's sorrow shared,
 To the place, on the snowy hillside,
 Where a scaffold had been prepared.

Here they gently unbound the death-robcs,
 For a tender, farewell look ;
 But the maiden seemed only sleeping,
 Like a winter, wild-wood brook.
 Soft moccasins, gauntlet-gloves, clothing,
 Were into her coffin thrown,
 That she might not lack on the journey,
 Which, they knew, she must ride alone.

He whom she had loved looked on her,
As she lay in the sunset light ;
He stood by the side of her mother,
In sorrow's gathering night.
He had reared a white mountain-lily
With other fair flowers of the West,
And these, with regret in their fragrance,
He laid on the dead girl's breast.

They closed the fur coffin, and raised it
To the scaffold's platform high,
With the head to the east, and wrapped it
In a pall of vermilion dye.
Then the red-men took up the wailing,
And the sweet, wild strain as before :
"She is dead. The pale-face has slain her.
Our Liberty is no more!"

The heads and the tails of the ponies,
Which were sacredly brought along,
To this grave in the air were fastened,
On the four posts firm and strong.
And a crystalline gift of water
Was set at either beast's head,
That he might not thirst on the journey
To the noiseless land of the dead.

THE KING AND THE NAIAD.

ONE injustice by another
Is o'ertaken from afar;
When the wrongs of peace grow mighty,
They beget the wrong of war.

"O king that rulest o'er us,
We are besieged by thirst.
There are two foes before us;
The unseen foe is worst.

"Lest thirst's sharp arrows slaughter,
Yield to the open foe,
And lead us to the water,
Tho it in thralldom flow."

Thus to Soüs, King of Sparta,
With parched lips his soldiers cried,

~~~~~

When Arcadian besiegers  
 Hemmed them in on every side.

In the dry and stony stronghold  
 Was no drop of water found;  
 But a brook, beyond the rampart,  
 Lightly danced along the ground.

Lofty Soüs bade a soldier  
 Wave a truce, and, with the foe,  
 Made a compact strong as granite,  
 With one rift where hope might grow.

Sparta will yield up her conquests;  
 To them she each claim will sink,  
 If her king and all his army  
 From the nearest fountain drink.

To these terms they made their pledges,  
 Whom dry thirst gave fearful odds,  
 And, to witness what they signed to,  
 Loudly called upon their gods.

In a deep, cool glen appareled  
 In green boughs, which swayed above,  
 To the sunlight rose the waters  
 Soft as eyes that beam with love.

Hither came the adversaries;  
 And the Spartans, as by whips,  
 Were ondriven to the kisses  
 Of the liquid, Naiad lips.

As each fever-throated fighter,  
 Bending low his waving crest,  
 Stooped to quaff his land's dishonor,  
 Him the troubled king addressed:

"If thou wilt not drink, but conquer  
 This temptation of the spring,  
 I will give to thee my kingdom,  
 And thou shalt be crowned its king!"

Heedless of him were his soldiers;  
 Thirst they gave a higher rank;  
 By the choking captain maddened,  
 All, with panic faces, drank.

It appeared not heavy water,  
 But divine air, cool and thin,  
 Which they, freed from stifling torture,  
 Now were deeply breathing in.

Lastly stooped thirst-burdened Soüs  
 To the treason of the spring;

But he turned, and would not drink it,  
Being absolutely king.

Rising, as his face he sprinkled,  
With his men he marched away,  
Scornful of the daunted captors  
Who in vain might say him nay.

He would yield not up his conquests,  
For himself and all his men  
Had not drank the sparkling pleasure  
That allured them to the glen.

## A HYMN FOR DECORATION DAY. \*

With fragrant flowers we decorate their graves,  
Who met in battle, or in prison-pen,  
A fruitful death ; who broke the chains of slaves,  
And crushed the might of proud and cruel men.

They broke the chains with tears of bondage wet,  
And gave their brave young lives for you and me ;  
For, where the slave endures, it is a threat  
Against the precious freedom of the free.

The sun of liberty dispels the dew,  
The tears, the night, and shines on near and far ;  
But, where it lights alone the selfish few,  
It sears and blights, and sinks in clouds of war.

'Tis fragrant gratitude we scatter o'er  
The graves of them who died for you and me :  
Their names, their dust, their memories, once more,  
O Liberty, we consecrate to thee !

## RALPH.

OLD, poor and alone—past seventy years.  
The fire is out; there is no wood to burn.  
I sit and shiver in the dreary cold,  
And, through the window looking on the road,  
Behold the pitiless, descending snow.  
How softly fall the tender, lace-like flakes!  
I wonder oft whether they come from God,  
And whether He loves His creatures every one,  
Or if He harshly turns to those who err,  
And, to the cloud-born whiteness feathering down,  
Pointing no finger, says without a tongue,  
*If thou art not as pure, pass on, pass on.*

I had a strong, brave son before the war.  
He said: "Dear mother, I am yours alone.  
You need me; we are poor; but I can work  
And fill your days with comfort for the past;  
For I in everything will do my best

To please you, and ward off the briers which catch  
 And wound the passers-by in life's hard path.  
 I shall not take a wife till you are gone,  
 And death from both of us, I trust, is far."

I loved him for the sacrifice he made;  
 I loved him for himself, he was so true.  
 My love at least had likeness to the snow.  
 But yet a mother's love should not be weighed  
 Against a love of country; this I found;  
 For my dear, only son, to serve his land,  
 Forsook me in my weakness and old age.

Our nearest neighbor lived a mile away.  
 Our road is rough, and to us travelers  
 Were rarer than the eagles and shy deer.  
 So, seldom seeing others, we became  
 The closer knit together, and each day  
 Both found new reasons for the purest love.  
 We prospered, for our rugged acres smiled,  
 Their yellow harvests dimpling in the breeze.  
 Well stocked the farm was, and the hay-stacks stood  
 Thick as the tents in Indian villages.

My Ralph was tall, a comely man to see.  
 Broad-shouldered, eagle-eyed, with fine, dark hair,

Complexion clear, with gladly conscious blood  
Painting his heart's thought on his handsome cheeks,  
He was to me the grandest man of men.  
And Ralph had honesty—a higher kind  
Of beauty; nay, honesty is great!  
Not all great men have fame out in the world;  
For many noble, self-denying deeds  
Are done in little things, and being done  
Are voiceless; but are like the shining rungs  
Which led, in Jacob's vision, up to God.

Warm shone the sun the day Ralph went away.  
With him I rode to town, and in the crowd  
Stood dazed; but clung about him while I could,  
And to his bearded cheeks pressed trembling lips  
Wet with the boding liquor of mine eyes;  
For Sorrow, drunken on the wine of tears,  
Sobbed, desperate, and, sighing, drank again.  
But the drums rolled and all the banners waved,  
And still I think I hear them in my ears  
And in my heart, the rolling, rolling drums,  
While over all I see the banners wave.  
In nights of storm I oft have lain awake,  
And thought the wind the rolling of the drums,  
And thought the snow the waving of the flags,  
The silken banners which I saw that day.

Your father, Ralph, almost deserted us.  
He made you do the work upon the farm,  
And hung about the tavern day by day,  
And in its liquid madness steeped his soul  
Until he died. Then, till the war broke out,  
You worked for me with patience and pure love,  
And I was proud and happy with my son.  
Alas! the frightful war! We might have dwelt  
In peace and plenty on these Northern hills,  
Nor heard the roar of battle all our lives.

There came no word from Ralph, nor any help.  
For many months I waited, every day  
A year, and every hour a weary month.  
Sleep only bridged a shallow, murky stream,  
Wherein I saw inverted thoughts and scenes  
Depending fringe-like from the shores of day,  
As I from waiting o'er to waiting crossed.

I sought to have the acres worked on shares;  
But men were scarce, and not a scythe opposed  
The ripe and peaceful armies of the grass.  
The man whom Ralph had hired to do my work,  
In scarce a month, himself went off to war.  
I sold the unused cattle one by one;  
The apples rotted on the loaded trees;

The grain, my bread, upon the toothless ground  
 Wasted its increase : all the crops were lost ;  
 The leaves turned red, and naught was gathered in.

After long months of waiting for some word,  
 The rumor of a battle reached my ears—  
 “Ten thousand slain! A glorious victory!”  
 Little those mothers think of victory  
 Whose sons lie silent on the ghastly plain ;  
 And what cares now even the splendid boy  
 Whose life was flashed out at the cannon’s mouth ?  
 My nearest neighbor, riding up this way,  
 Brought me a paper having news of Ralph—  
*Wounded and missing*, printed next his name.  
 I read ; the cheerless room went wildly round,  
 And to the floor I fell, and all was night.

Weary the months that had been, wearier still  
 The months which followed, with no word, no word.  
 I think that, had I known my darling dead,  
 I should have felt more peace ; but, oh ! those words,  
 “Wounded and missing,” kept ringing in my brain,  
 Like loud, wild bells of dolor and alarm.

Only a year ago, only a year,  
 Only a little year, it does not seem so long,

A letter came from Ralph, a few brief lines :  
 Freed from a Southern prison ; coming home !  
 Home ! Home once more ! O Ralph, my soldier son,  
 How glad I was ! how strong I felt ! how sure  
 That God had crowned my waiting, heard my prayers !

A year ago, only a little year,  
 Ralph had not come. How could he wait so long ?  
 When the dull light of that dark morning broke  
 I looked out on the fields and saw it snow,  
 And wondered whether Ralph would come that day,  
 For something said to me that he would come.  
 The snow had fallen all night, and it was cold,  
 Almost too bitter cold for snow to fall.  
 The fences and the road were lost in drifts.  
 I saw the silent trees all cold and white,  
 With branches thrown up like the stiffened arms  
 Of dead men on a battle-field. Till noon  
 I kept my post, here at the frosted pane,  
 Watching for Ralph ; but still he did not come.  
 At last, urged by an impulse new and strange,  
 And gifted with a strength not mine before,  
 I strode out in the storm and struggled on  
 Down to the road, and out beyond the hill,  
 But stumbled there on something in the snow.  
 The chilly fleece I brushed away, and found

A soldier kneeling with his face bent down  
As if he kissed an angel's flowing robe,  
And not the threadless raiment of the storm.  
I turned the body ; it was stiff and cold ;  
And in the sunken features pale and thin,  
Disfigured by a scar across the cheek,  
I saw my Ralph, my lifeless, darling Ralph.  
He must have died almost in sight of home.  
If he had only struggled to the top,  
And not sunk down behind the little hill,  
I should have seen him and have helped him in.

Under the arms I dragged the body back,  
And chafed and warmed and bathed it ; but the heart,  
Whose beat had been a steady martial tread,  
Moved not, and all was still. No voice, no breath ;  
Only a stony silence white and cold.  
Here for two days I sat and watched my dead.  
I did not eat nor sleep, but moaned alone.  
I did not care to live ; I prayed to die.  
I bent above the calm, unanswering lips,  
And begged them speak, if naught but one farewell ;  
And on the face my white hair lay like snow.  
They found me thus, watching my dead brave son—  
My dead son, dead for his proud bride's sake.  
His country was his bride ; he loved her well.

But always they endure great bitterness  
Who give themselves to high, unselfish aims ;  
And Ralph's distracted bride, in angry mood,  
As if demanding only sacrifice,  
Requited him with hunger, wounds and death.

And now I am alone, alone. No more  
Is left a hope that Ralph will come again ;  
Yet I may go to him and cease to mourn,  
For we shall dwell where there will be no tears,  
Nor cold, nor lack of food, nor any war ;  
And the pure Christ, who suffered wounds and death,  
And knows how precious is a mother's love,  
Will cleanse my lifted spirit white as snow.

## ALONG THE NILE.

We journey up the storied Nile;  
The lightsome water seems to smile;  
The slow and swarthy boatman sings;  
The quaint dahbeyeh spreads her wings;  
We catch the breeze and sail away,  
Along the dawning of the day,  
Along the East, wherein was born  
Of life and truth the splendid morn.

We sail along the past, and see  
Great Thebes with Karnak at her knee.  
To Isis and Osiris rise  
The prayers and smoke of sacrifice.  
'Mid rites of priests and pomp of kings  
Again the seated Memnon sings.  
We watch the palms along the shore,  
And dream of what is here no more.

Unchangeable, the gliding Nile,  
 With glossy windings, mile on mile,  
 Suggests the asp : in coils compact  
 It hisses, at the cataract.  
 Thence on again we sail, and strand  
 Upon the yellow, Nubian sand,  
 And reach that rock-hewn miracle,  
 The temple of Abou-Sambul.

Who cut the stone joy none can tell ;  
 He did his work, like Nature, well.  
 At one with Nature, calm and grand,  
 The faces of Rameses stand.  
 'Tis seemly that the noble mind  
 Somewhat of permanence may find,  
 Whereon, with patience, may be wrought  
 A clear expression of its thought.

The artist labors while he may,  
 But finds at best too brief the day ;  
 And, tho his works outlast the time  
 And nation that they make sublime,  
 He feels and sees that Nature knows  
 Nothing of time in what she does,  
 But has a leisure infinite  
 Wherein to do her work aright.

The Nile of virtue overflows  
The fruitful lands through which it goes.  
It little cares for smile or slight,  
But in its deeds takes sole delight,  
And in them puts its highest sense,  
Unmindful of the recompense;  
Contented calmly to pursue  
Whatever work it finds to do.

Howadji, with sweet dreams full fraught,  
We trace this Nile through human thought.  
Remains of ancient grandeur stand  
Along the shores on either hand.  
Like pyramids, against the skies  
Loom up the old philosophies,  
And the Greek king, who wandered long,  
Smiles from uncrumbling rock of song.

THE END.

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